

A SELECT COLLECTION
OF
OLD ENGLISH PLAYS

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED BY ROBERT DODSLY
IN THE YEAR 1744

FOURTH EDITION,

NOW FIRST CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED, REVISED AND ENLARGED
WITH THE NOTES OF ALL THE COMMENTATORS
AND NEW NOTES

BY

W CAREW HAZLITT

VOLUME THE THIRD

LONDON:
REEVES AND TURNER, 196 STRAND
AND 185 FLEET STREET.
1874

NEW CUSTOM.

*A New Enterlude, no lesse wittie then pleasunt, entituled
new Custome, deuised of late, and for diuerse causes
none set for the, neuer before this tyme imprinted 1573
[Col] Imprinted at London, in Fleete ströte, by William
How for Abraham Veale, dwelling in Pauls church-
yard at the signe of the Lambe 4to, B L*

DODSLEY'S PREFACE.

I HAVE not been able to discover who was the author of this piece. But I think it is one of the most remarkable of our ancient moralities, as it was wrote purposely to vindicate and promote the Reformation. It was printed in 1573, and contrived so that four people might act it, this was frequently done for the convenience of such as were disposed to divert or improve themselves, by representing these kinds of entertainments in their own houses

[The authorship of "New Custom" remains undiscovered. It is a piece which may have been written a few years before it was printed, and is one of the dramatic efforts in furtherance of the Reformation. At the same time, there is no apparent foundation for the hypothesis that the morality was in existence any great length of time before the date of publication.]

THE PLAYERS' NAMES IN THIS INTERLUDE BE THESE

The Prologue

PERVERSE DOCTRINE, *an old Popish Priest*

IGNORANCE, *another, but elder*

NEW CUSTOM, *a Minister*

LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL, *a Minister*

HYPOCRISY, *an old Woman*

CRUELTY, *a Ruffler* ¹

AVARICE, *a Ruffler*

EDIFICATION, *a Sage*

ASSURANCE, *a Virtue*

GOD'S FELICITY, *a Sage*

FOUR MAY PLAY THIS INTERLUDE

1	PERVERSE DOCTRINE	3	{ NEW CUSTOM AVARICE ASSURANCE.
2	{ IGNORANCE, HYPOCRISY, and EDIFICATION	4	{ LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL CRUELTY GOD'S FELICITY THE PROLOGUE

¹ A cheating bully, so called in several Acts of Parliament during the reign of King Henry the Eighth —S

THE PROLOGUE

All things be not so as in sight they do seem,
Whatsoever they resemble, or whatever men deem.
For if our senses in their own objects us do fail
Sometimes, then our judgment shall but little avail
In some things, as such, where doubt giveth denial
Of them in the best wise to make any trial.
Which saying is evident, as well shall appear
In this little interlude, which we present here ;
Whereby we may learn how grossly we err,
Taking one thing for another, which differ so far,
As good doth from bad. Example therefore
You may take by these persons, if you mark no
more
For the primitive constitution, which was first
appointed
Even by God himself and by Christ his anointed ,
Confirmed by th' Apostles, and of great antiquity
See, how it is perverted by man's wicked iniquity,
To be called New Custom or New Constitution,
Surely a name of too much ungodly abusion
Which our author, indifferently scanning in his
mind,
In his simple opinion this cause he doth find
That, by reason of ignorance which beareth great
sway,
And also stubborn doctrine, which shutteth up the
way
To all good instruction and knowledge of right

No marvel it was, though of the truth we were
ignorant quite
For truly in such a case the matter was but small
To make the ignorant soul to credit them all,
Whatsoever they said, were it truth or a lie
For no man able was then to prove them the contrary
Wherefore their own fancies they set in great price,
Neglecting the true way, like men far unwise
Making semblant of antiquity in all that they did,
To th' intent that their subtlety by such means
might be hid
New Custom also hath he named this matter verily,
In consideration that the people so speaketh commonly,
Confuting the same by reasons most manifest,
Which in consequent order of talk are exprest
This sense hath our author followed herein, as we
said,
For other meaning moreover he will not have it
denayed,
But diverse may invent much distant from this,
Which in no wise he will have prejudicial to his,
Nor his unto theirs, whatsoever they be,
For many heads, many wits,¹ we do plainly see
Only he desireth this of the worshipful audience
To take in good part without all manner offence,
Whatsoever shall be spoken, marking the intent,
Interpreting it no otherwise but as it was meant
And for us, if of patience you list to attend,
We are ready to declare you the matter to the end

FINIS PROLOGI

¹ [A common proverb, of which there are varying versions, but the original is *quot homines, &c*]

NEW CUSTOM.



ACTUS I, SCÆNA 1

PERVERSE DOCTRINE *and* IGNORANCE *enter*

PERV DOC It is even so indeed, the world was
never in so evil a state,
But this is no time for us of these matters to debate
It were good we invented some politic way
Our matters to address in good orderly stay
And for us reason would we looked to ourselves
Do you not see how these new-fangled prattling
elves
Prink up so pertly of late in every place,
And go about us ancients flatly to deface?
As who should say in short time, as well learned
as we,
As wise to the world, as good they might accounted
be,
Nay, nay, if many years and grey hairs do know
no more,
But that every peevish boy hath even as much wit
in store
By the mass, then, have I lived too long, and I
would I were dead,
If I have not more knowledge than a thousand of
them in my head,

For how should they have learning that were born
but even now?

As fit a sight it were to see a goose shod or a
saddled cow,

As to hear the prattling of any such Jack Straw
For, when he hath all done, I count him but a very
daw

As in London not long since, you wot well where,
They rang to a sermon, and we chanced to be there
Up stert the preacher, I think not past twenty
years old,

With a sounding voice and audacity bold,
And began to revile at the holy sacrament and
transubstantiation

I never heard one knave or other make such a
declaration

But, if I had had the boy in a convenient place,
With a good rod or twain, not past one hour's
space

I would so have scourged my merchant,¹ that his
breech should ache,

So long as it is since that he those words spake
What, young men to be meddlers in divinity? it
is a goodly sight!

Yet therein now almost is every boy's delight,
No book now in their hands, but all scripture,
scripture.

Either the whole Bible or the New Testament, you
may be sure

The New Testament for them? and then too for
Coll my dog!²

¹ *Merchant* was anciently used as we now use the word
chap. See note on "Romeo and Juliet," A 2, S 4—
Steevens

² *Cowle* or rather *coll* [Coll] I suppose to be the name of
the dog—*Steevens*.

Cowle my dog, I am inclined to believe, means *put a coul*

This is the old proverb—to cast pearls to an hog
 Give them that which is meet for them, a racket
 and a ball,
 Or some other tifle to busy their heads withal
 Playing at quoits or nine-holes,¹ or shooting at
 butts,
 There let them be, a God's name, till their hearts
 ache and their guts !
 Let us alone with divinity, which are of riper age
 Youth is rash, they say, but old men hath the
 knowledge.
 For while they read they know not what, they
 omit the verity,
 And that is now the cause so many fall into heresy,
 Every man hath his own way, some that and some
 this,
 It would almost for anger (sir reverence!²) make a
 man to piss,
 To hear what they talk of in open communication.

on hood on a dog, and he will be as learned as a friar the contempt into which the order had at this period fallen will at least countenance the explanation, if it should not be thought sufficient to prove it. I once was of opinion, that there might be an allusion to the case of one Collins, a crazy man, who seeing a priest hold up the host over his head, lifted up a dog in the same manner, for which both he and the animal were burnt in 1538. See Fox, vol. II. 436.

My conjecture requires a little explanation. The speaker means to say, "If the New Testament is fit for the use of boys, so likewise is it adapted equally to the conception of *Coll my dog*. The one will understand and make a proper use of it as soon as the other"—*Steevens*. [What will be thought of the preceding note, I hardly know, the text is the clearer.]

¹ By the Stat 33 Hen VIII, c 9, s 16, a penalty is imposed on certain persons therein mentioned, who should play at the tables, tennis, dice, cards, bowls, clash, *coyting*, logating, or other unlawful game.

² Perhaps a contraction of *save your reverence*—*Steevens*

Surely I fear me, Ignorance, this gear will make
some desolation

IGNORANCE I fear the same also, but as touching
that whereof you speak full well,
They have revoked divers old heresies out of hell
As against transubstantiation, purgatory, and the
mass,

And say that by scripture they cannot be brought
to pass

But that which ever hath been a most true and
constant opinion,

And defended also hitherto by all of our religion,
That I, Ignorance, am the mother of true devo-
tion,

And Knowledge the author of the contrary affec-
tion

They deny it so stoutly as though it were not so,
But this hath been believed many an hundred year
ago

Wherefore it grieveth me not a little that my case
should so stand,

Thus to be disproved at every prattler's hand

PERV DOC Yea, doth[?] then the more unwise
man you, as I trow,

For they say as much by me, as you well do know
And shall I then go vex myself at their talk[?]

No, let them speak so long as their tongues can
walk

They shall not grieve me, for why in very sooth
It were folly to endeavour to stop every man's
mouth

They have brought in one, a young upstart lad, as
it appears,

I am sure he hath not been in the realm very many
years,

With a gathered frock, a polled head and a broad
hat,

An unshaved beard, a pale face , and he teacheth
that
All our doings are nought, and hath been many a
day
He disalloweth our ceremonies and rites, and
• teacheth another way
To serve God, than that which we do use,
And goeth about the people's minds to seduce
It is a pestilent knave, he will have priests no
corner-cap to wear,¹
Surplices are superstition beads, paxes, and such
other gear,
Crosses, bells, candles, oil, bran, salt, spettle, and
incense,
With censing and singing, he accounts not worth
three-halfpence,
And cries out on them all (if to repeat them I wist)
Such holy things, wherein our religion doth consist
But he commands the service in English to be
read,

¹ Fox, in the third volume of his "Acts and Monuments," p 131, says "Over and besides divers other things touching M Rogers, this is not to be forgotten, how in the daies of King Edward the Sixth, there was a controversie among the Bishops and Clergie for wearing of priests caps, and other attyre belonging to that order Master Rogers, being one of that number which never went otherwise than in a round cap during all the time of King Edward, affirmed that he would not agree to that decree ment of uniformitie, but upon this condition, that if they would needs have such an uniformitie of wearing the cap, tippet, &c, then it should be decreed withall, that the papists, for a difference betwixt them and others, should be constrained to weare upon their sleeves a chalice with an host upon it Whereunto if they would consent, he would agree to the other, otherwise he would not, he said, consent to the setting forth of the same, nor ever weare the cap, nor indeed he never did "

And for the Holy Legend¹ the Bible to put in his
stead,
Every man to look thereon at his list and pleasure,
Every man to study divinity at his convenient
leisure,
With a thousand new guises more you know as
well as I
And to term him by his right name, if I should
not he,
It is New Custom, for so they do him call,
Both our sister Hypocrisy, Superstition, Idolatry
and all
And truly me-thinketh, they do justly and wisely
therein,
Since he is so diverse, and so lately crept in
IGNORANCE So they call him indeed, you have
said right well,
Because he came newly from the devil of hell,
New Custom, quoth you? now a vengeance of his
new nose,
For bringing in any such unaccustomed glose!
For he hath seduced the people by mighty great
flocks
Body of God, it were good to set the knave in the
stocks
Or else to whip him for an example to all rogues
as he,
How they the authors of new heresies be,
Or henceforth do attempt any such strange devise
Let him keep himself from my hands, if he be wise
If ever I may take him within my reign,
He is sure to have whipping there for his pain.
For he doth much harm in each place throughout
the land

¹ I suppose the "Legenda Aurea," the "Golden Legend" of Jacobus de Voragine — *Steevens*.

Wherefore, Perverse Doctrine, here needeth you
hand

I mean that ye be diligent in any case,
If ye fortune to come, where New Custom is in
place,

So to use the villan, you know what I mean,
That in all points you may discredit him clean,
And when he begins of anything for to clatter,
Of any controversy of learning or divinity matter,
So to cling fast unto every man's thought,
That his words may seem heresy, and his doings
but nought

PERV DOC Tush, let me alone with that, for I
have not so little wit,

But I have practised this already, and mind also
to do it

Yet a further device I have, I think, not amiss
Hearken to me, Ignorance, for the matter is this
For the better accomplishing our subtlety pre-
tended,¹

It were expedient that both our names were
amended,

Ignorance shall be Simplicity, for that comes very
nigh,

And for Perverse Doctrine I will be called Sound
Doctrine, I

And now that we are both in such sort named,
We may go in any place, and never be blamed
See then you remember your name, sir Simplicity,
And me at every word Sound Doctrine to be,
Beware of tripping, but look in mind that you
bear

Your feigned name, and what before you were
But who is this that hitherward doth walk?
Let us stand still, to hear what he will talk

¹ [Intended]

ACTUS I, SCÆNA 2

NEW CUSTOM *entereth alone*

NEW CUS When I consider the ancient times
 before,
 That have been these eight hundred years and more,
 And those confer with these our later days,
 My mind do these displease a thousand ways.
 For sure he, that hath both perceived aright,
 Will say they differ as darkness doth from light
 For then plain-dealing bare away the prize,
 All things were ruled by men of good advice,
 Conscience prevailed much, even everywhere,
 No man deceived his neighbour and eke a thing
 full rare
 It was to find a man you might not trust;
 But look what once they promised, they did that
 well and just
 If neighbours were at variance, they ran not straight
 to law
 Daysmen¹ took up the matter, and cost them not
 a straw,
 Such delight they had to kill debate and strife,
 And surely even in those days was there more
 godlier life

¹ i e, Umpires So Spenser—

“For what art thou
 That makst thyself his *daysman*, to prolong
 The vengeance past?”—*Faerie Queene*—S

A *days-man*, says Ray, in his “Collection of North Country Words,” p 25, is “an arbitrator, an umpire or judge For, as Dr Hammond observes in his Annotation on Heb x 25, p 752, the word *day*, in all languages and idioms, signifies judgment So *man's day*, 1 Cor iii 13, is the judgment of men So *diem dicere* in Latin is to implead.”

Howbeit men of all ages are wonted to dispraise
The wickedness of time that flourished at their
days

As well he may discern, who for that but lightly
looks,

In every leaf almost of all their books.

For as for Christ our master, what he thought of
Jews,

And after him th' apostles, I think it is no news

PERV DOC Hark, Simplicity, he is some
preacher, I will lay my gown,

He mindeth to make a sermon within this town

He speaketh honestly yet, but surely, if he rail at
me,

I may not abide him, by the mass, I promise thee

NEW CUS Paul to the Corinthians plainly doth
tell,

That their behaviour pleased him not well

All our forefathers likewise have been offended

With divers faults at their time, that might have
been amended

The doctors of the church great fault they did find,

In that men lived not after their mind

First with the rulers as examples of sin,

Then with the people as continuing therein.

So that of them both this one thing they thought,

That the people was not good, but the rulers were
nought

But in comparison of this time of misery,

In those days men lived in perfect felicity

Saint Paul prophesied that worse times should
ensue,

In novissimis venient quidam, saith he, this is true,

Following all mischief, ungodliness and evil,

Leaning to all wickedness and doctrine of the devil,

And spake he not of these days, think you, I pray?

The proof is so plain that no man can deny

For this is sure, that never in any age before
Naughtiness and sin hath been practised more,
Or half so much, or at all, in respect so I say,
And is now (God amend all) at this present day
Sin now no sin, faults no faults a whit
O God, seest thou this, and yet wilt suffer it ?
Surely thy mercy is great, but yet our sins, I fear,
Are so great, that of justice with them thou canst
not bear

Adultery no vice, it is a thing so rife,
A stale jest now to lie with another man's wife !
For what is that but dalliance ? Covetousness they
call

Good husbandry, when one man would fain have
all

And eke alike to that is unmerciful extortion,
A sin in sight of God of great abomination
For pride, that is now a grace, for round about
The humble-spirited is termed a fool or a lout
Whoso will be so drunken, that he scarcely know-
eth his way,

O, he is a good fellow, so now-a-days they say
Gluttony is hospitality, while they meat and drink
spill,

Which would relieve diverse whom famine doth
kill.

As for all charitable deeds, they be gone, God
know'th,

Some pretend lack, but the chief cause is sloth
A vice most outrageous of all others sure,
Right hateful to God, and contrary to nature
Scarce blood is punished but even for very shame,
So make they of murder but a trifling game.
O, how many examples of that horrible vice
Do daily among us now spring and arise !
But thanks be to God that such rulers doth send,
Which earnestly study that fault to amend

As by the sharp punishment of that wicked crime
We may see that committed was but of late time
God direct their hearts they may always continue
Such just execution on sin to ensue ,
So shall be saved the life of many a man,
And God will withdraw his sore plagues from us
then

Theft is but policy, perjury but a face,
Such is now the world, so far men be from grace
But what shall I say of religion and knowledge
Of God, which hath been indifferent in each age
Before this ? howbeit his faults then it had,
And in some points then was culpable and bad
Surely this one thing I may say aright
God hath rejected us away from him quite,
And given us up wholly unto our own thought,
Utterly to destroy us, and bring us to nought
For do they not follow the inventions of men ?
Look on the primitive church, and tell me then,
Whether they served God in this same wise,
Or whether they followed any other guise ?
For since God's fear decayed, and hypocrisy crept in,
In hope of some gains and lucre to win,
Cruelty bare a stroke, who with fagot and fire
Brought all things to pass that he did desire
Next avarice spilt all, which, lest it should be spied,
Hypocrisy ensued the matter to hide
Then brought they in their monsters, their masses,
their light,
Their torches at noon to darken our sight
Their popes and their pardons, their purgatories
for souls
Their smoking of the church and flinging of coals
IGNORANCE Stay yet a while, and let us hear
more communication
PERV DOC I cannot, by God's soul, if I might
have all this nation

Shall I suffer a knave thus to rail and prate?
 Nay then, I pray God, the devil break my pate!
 I will be revenged, ere he depart away—
 Ah, sirrah, you have made a fair speak here to-day,
 Do you look for any reward for your deed?
 It were good to beat thee, till thy head bleed,
 Or to scourge thee well-favouredly at a cart's tail,
 To teach such an whoreson to blaspheme and rail
 At such holy mysteries and matters so high,
 As thou speakest of now, and rail'dst at so lately!

NEW CUS. What mean ye, sir, or to whom do
 you speak?

Art you minded on me your anger to wreak,
 Which have not offended, as far as I know?

PERV. DOC. I speak to thee, knave, thou art
 mad, I trow

What meanest thou to rail right now so contempt-
 tuously

At the chiefest secrets of all divinity?

NEW CUS. Verily I railed not, so far as I can
 tell,

I spake but advisedly, I know very well,
 For I will stand to it, whatsoever I said

PERV. DOC. Wilt thou so? but I will make thee
 well afraid,¹

To recant thy words, I hold thee a pound,
 Before thou depart hence out of this ground

NEW CUS. No, that shall you not do, if I die
 therefore

PERV. DOC. Thou shalt see anon, go to, prattle
 no more,

But tell me the effect of the words which were said

NEW CUS. To recite them again, I am not
 afraid.

¹ Well content. In Psalm lxxxiii ver 8, we have—
 "And Assur etc is well afraid
 With them in league to be"

I said that the mass, and such tumperry as that,
 Popery, purgatory, pardons, were flat
 Against God's word and primitive constitution,
 Crept in through covetousness and superstition
 Of late years, through blindness, and men of no
 knowledge,

Even such as have been in every age

PERV DOC Now, precious whoreson, thou hast
 made a lie,

How canst thou prove that, tell me by and by

NEW CUS It needeth small proof, the effect
 doth appear

Neither this is any place for to argue here

And, as for my saying, I hold the negative

It lieth you upon to prove the affirmative,

To show that such things were used in antiquity,

And then I can easily prove you the contrary

PERV DOC Standest thou with me on school
 points? dost thou so indeed?

Thou hadst best to prove me whether I can read,

Thinkest thou I have no logic, indeed thinkest
 thou so?

Yes, prinkocks, that I have, for forty years ago

I could smatter in a Duns¹ prettily, I do not jest.

Better I am sure than a hundred of you, whosoever
 is the best

NEW CUS Truly I believe you, for in such fond
 books

You spent idly your time and wearied your looks

More better it had been in books of holy scripture

Where as virtue is expressed, and religion pure,

To have passed your youth, as the Bible and such

Than in these trifles to have dolted so much.

¹ *i e*, in the theological writings of *Duns Scotus*, who
 obtained the title of *Doctor Subtilis* — *S* See also note 23
 to 'The Revenger's Tragedy'

Not more to have regarded a Duns or a Questionist,
Than you would the words of the holy evangelist
PERV DOC What, for a child to meddle with
the Bible?

NEW CUS Yea, sure, more better than so to be
idle

PERV DOC Is study then idleness? that is a
new term

NEW CUS They say better to be idle than to do
harm

PERV DOC What harm doth knowledge? I
pray thee, tell me

NEW CUS Knowledge puffeth up, in Saint Paul
you may see

PERV DOC Yea, but what knowledge meaneth
he? tell me that

NEW CUS Even such knowledge as ye profess
flat,

For the truth and the gospel you have in contempt,
And follow such toys as yourselves do invent.
Forsaking God's laws and the apostle's institution
In all your proceedings and matters of religion

PERV DOC By what speakest thou that, let
me hear thy judgment?

NEW CUS Not by any guess, but by that which
is evident

As for the scriptures, you have abolished clean,
New fashions you have constitute in religion, again,
Abuse of the sacraments than hath been to-fore,
Have you brought, and in number have you made
them more

Than Christ ever made wherefore show your
aucturity,

Or else have you done to the church great injury
Th' apostles never taught your transubstantiation
Of bread into flesh, or any such fashion,
Howbeit they were conversant every day and hour,

And received that sacrament of Christ our Saviour
You feign also that Peter was bishop of Rome,
And that he first instituted the seat of your Pope-
dom

But, perverse nation, how dare you for shame
Your fancies on Christ and th' apostles to frame ?

PERV DOC Marry, avaunt, Jack-sauce and prating
knave,

I will conjure thy coat, if thou leave not to rave
With all my heart and a vengeance, come up and
be nought

I see we shall have an heretic of thee, as I thought
These things were approved, ere thou wast born,
dost thou not see ?

And shall be, when thou art hanged, I warrant thee

NEW CUS Eie I was born ' nay, sure that is
not true,

For in comparison of me they be but new

PERV DOC Of thee ' ha, ha, ha ' what, of thee '
thou art mad

NEW CUS Surely in my sort I am both sober
and sad ¹

PERV DOC Why, how old art thou ? tell me, I
pray thee heartily

NEW CUS Elder than you, I perceive

PERV DOC What, older than I ?

The young knave, by the mass, not fully thirty,
Would be elder than I, that am above sixty !

NEW CUS A thousand and a half, that surely
is my age

Ask and inquire of all men of knowledge

PERV DOC A thousand years ? God's precious
soul, I am out of my wits,

He is possessed of some devil or of some evil
spirits

¹ [Serious]

Why, thou art a young knave of that sort, I say,
 That brought into this realm but the other day
 This new learning and these heresies, and such
 other things mo,
 With strange guises invented not long ago ¹
 And I pray thee tell me, is not thy name New
 Custom ?

NEW CUS Truly so I am called of some,
 As of such as want both wit and understanding,
 As you do now, I know by your talking
 But woe be to those that make no distinction
 Between many things of diverse condition,
 As naught to be good, and hot to be cold,
 And old to be new, and new to be old
 Wherefore these deceits you daily invent,
 The people to seduce unto your advertisement,
 While with tales you assay, and with lies you begin,
 The truth to deface, and your credit to win

PERV DOC What is thy name, then ? I pray
 thee make declaration

NEW CUS In faith, my name is Primitive Con-
 stitution

PERV DOC Who ? who, *Prava Constitutio* ? even
 so I thought,
 I wist that it was some such thing of nought ²

¹ The original copy reads—

“With strange guises invented *now* long agoe”

But the sense seems to require the negative, which former editors substituted for *now*—C

² So in *Hamlet*. “The king is a *thing of nothing*” See the Notes of Dr Johnson, Dr Farmer, and Mr Steevens on that passage, edition of Shakspeare, 1778, vol 10, p 336 This play on the words was very common

Again, in “The Humorous Lieutenant,” A iv S 6—

“Shall, then, that thing that honours thee
 How miserable a thing soever, yet a thing still,
 And, tho’ a *thing of nothing*, thy thing ever’

[Dyce’s edit vi 516.]

Like lettuce,¹ like lips, a scabb'd horse for a scald squire

NEW CUS *Primitive Constitution* I said, if you hear,

Such orders as in the primitive church heretofore
Were used, but not now, the more pity therefore

PERV DOC Ha, ha ' in good time, sir, well
might you fare, Primitive Constitution,

That is your true name, you say, without all delusion
Primitive Constitution (quodestow²) as much as

my sleeve !

The devil on him which will such hairs believe !

For my part, if I credit such an hairy nowl,³

The foul fiend of hell fetch me, body and soul !

NEW CUS Truth cannot prevail, where Ignorance
is in place

IGNORANCE Peace, or I will lay my beads on
thy face

Hast thou nothing to rail at but Ignorance, I trow ?

NEW CUS You may use me even at your
pleasure, I know,

For Perverse Doctrine, that is rooted so fast,

That it may not be changed at no heavenly blast,

May not hear the contrary, but beginneth to kick,

¹ "*Similes habent labra lactucas* A thistle is a sallet fit for an ass's mouth We use when we would signify that things happen to people which are suitable to them, or which they deserve, as when a dull scholar happens to a stupid or ignorant master, a froward wife to a peevish husband, &c *Dignum patella operculum* Like priest, like people, and on the contrary These proverbs are always taken in the worst sense *Tal carne, tal cultello, Ital* Like flesh, like knife" [See Hazlitt's "Proverbs," &c, 1869, pp 33, 263]

² [*re*, Quodest thou, or saidest thou]

³ [Old copy and Dodsley, *nowle* A hairy nowl is a member of the reformed faith, as distinguished from the shaven crowns of the priests]

Like a jade when he feeleth the spur for to prick
 PERV. DOC Yea ¹ say'st thou so, thou miscreant
 villain ?

A little thing would make me knock out thy brann
 Hence out of my sight away, packing, trudge ¹
 Thou detestable heretic, thou catiff, thou drudge
 If I may take thee, it were as good thou were dead,
 For even with this portace ¹ I will batter thy head
 [Exit New Custom

Though I hang therefore, I care not, I,
 So I be revenged on a slave, ere I die
 Sacrament of God ¹ who hath heard such a knave ?
 Who, after he had done at Ignorance to rave,
 Perverse Doctrine (quod he) is also rooted so fast,
 That he may be changed by no heavenly blast
 No, God's soul, I warrant him, I will see him
 rotten,

Before that my doctrine I shall have forgotten
 Wherefore it behoveth us some counsel to take
 How we the stronger our matters may make,
 Against the surprise of this new invasion,
 Begun of late by this strange generation,
 Of New Custom and his makes, ² meaning to deface

¹ Sometimes written *portas*, or *portos*, *ie*, *breuiary*—Du Cange, in *Portiforum* “*Portuasses*, Mr Tytwhitt observes (Notes on Chaucer, ver 13061), are mentioned among other prohibited books in the Stat 3 and 4 Edw VI c 10 And in the Parliament Roll of 7, Edw IV n 40, there is a petition, that the robbing of Porteous, Grayell, Manuell, &c, should be made felonie without clergy, to which the King answered, *La Roy s'arusera*”

The *portuse* is mentioned in Greene's “History of Fryer Bacon and Fryer Bungay” [Works by Dyce, 1861, p 162—]

“ I ll hamper up the match,
 I ll take my *portace* forth, and wed you here ”

² *Make* is used for *mate* throughout the works of Gower Shakspeare likewise, if I am not mistaken, employs it in one of his sonnets —S

Our ancient rites and religion, and to place
 Their devilish doctrine the Gospel, and so
 Our gains to debate, and ourselves to undo
 I think it best therefore that our sister Hypocrisy
 Do understand fully of this matter by and by
 Let us go and seek her, the case for to show,
 That we her good counsel may speedily know
 IGNORANCE I am ready, in following I will
 not be slow [*Exeunt*]

ACTUS II, SCENA 1.

LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL *and* NEW CUSTOM *enter*.

L OF GOSPEL Doubt you nothing at all, for
 God will so provide,
 Who leaveth not his elect to defend and to guide
 That wherever I come, such grace you may find,
 As shall in each point content well your mind,
 And admit that they call you New Custom, what
 then?

Attribute that folly to the ignorance of men,
 That follow their fancies, and know not the right
 Well, you know where I come once, the Light
 Of the Gospel, whose beams do glister so clear,
 Then, Primitive Constitution, in each place you
 appear,
 And as elsewhere you have been, so do not mistrust,
 But in this place hereafter be received you must
 NEW CUS According to your nature, so do you
 very well

To put me in good hope, bright Light of the Gospel
 And seeing you be true, I may in no wise
 Misdeem you the father or author of lies
 For if trust to the gospel do purchase perpetuance
 Of life unto him, who therein hath confidence,

What shall the light do, whose beams be so bright,
 That in each respect all things else of light
 Are but very darkness, and eke terrestrial ?
 So the Light of the Gospel overshineth them all
 Wherefore with great comfort I receive your
 counsel,

With hearty thanks unto you, the Light of the
 Gospel

L OF GOSPEL Do so, and by faith then shall
 you obtain

Whatsoever you desire, the scripture saith plain
 For *quicquid petieritis in nomine meo*,
 It must of truth needs be understood so
 That without faith, whatsoever we fortune to crave,
 We may not look for it our desire to have
 Faith moveth mountains, so it be pure faith indeed,
 By faith we obtain whatsoever we need
 Then faith shall restore to you more things than
 this,

Believe me, Primitive Constitution, whatsoever is
 amiss

But where be those reprobates, devoid of all grace,
 Who lately misused you, as you said, in this place ?

NEW CUS They be suddenly departed, I wot not
 well whither,

For I left them right now both here together
 They cannot be far hence, I know very well,
 Where they be, there is none, if we ask, but can
 tell

L OF GOSPEL Do you know them again, if you
 meet them aright ?

NEW CUS Yea, sir, that I do, even at the first
 sight

L. OF GOSPEL Then let us not tarry, but go
 seek them straight

NEW CUS At hand I am ready on you for to
 wait.

[*Exeunt*

ACTUS II, SCENA 2

HYPOCRISY, PERVERSE DOCTRINE, *and*
IGNORANCE *enter*

, HYPOCRISY Perverse Doctrine, I say, take heed
in any sort

That thou never believe whatsoever they report,
Though they of the Gospel never so much do preach.
Every man will not credit whatsoever they teach
They will not say, *all believe*, when they do not, I
promise thee

For that time will never come in this world, trust
me

Tush, tush, be thou busied in any case
To discredit then preaching in every place
If they teach them one thing, then teach thou the
contrary,

And if that no scripture for thy place thou have
ready,

In words that supply, which wanteth in reason,
For all things applied sometime in good season,
As of better eftsoons do import the weight,
So they be well ordered by good policy and sleight
Howbeit their doctrine be sound, yet their vices
find out,

As this is a sloven, or this is a lout
He speaketh on envy, such a one for need,
This saith it in words, but he thinketh it not in
deed

Upon greater occasion they stick not to rave,
Saying, this is a whoremaster villain, he, an heretic
knave,

An extortioner, a thief, a traitor, a murderer,
A covetous person, a common usurer
This he doth for my mistress his wife's sake, by
the rood,

The better to maintain and support the French
hood¹

Remember also, that it were a great shame
For thee for to have forgotten thy own name
Perverse Doctrine, of right, must the truth so per-
vert,

That he never let it sink into any man's heart
As far as he can, with diligence withstand,
For ever it behoveth thee to be ready at hand,
To strengthen thine own parts, and disprove other
doctrine,

Whatsoever shall be taught that is contrary to
thine

Still pretend religion, whatsoever you say,
And that shall get thee good credit away,
Pleasing the multitude with such kind of gear,²
As with them, to the which most inclined they are
Square caps, long gowns, with tippets of silk,
Brave copes in the church, surplices as white as
milk,

Beads, and such like all these bear the price
To these things apply thy attendant device
And other likewise, which well you do know,
Which all of great holiness do set forth a show
Though some of them, doubtless, be indifferent,
what matter¹

They furnish our business never the latter
For these, of antiquity since that they do smell,
Our cause must commend right wonderful well
And these be the things whereof thou hast need,
The better of thy will and purpose to speed
Then give thy attendance, and so be sure of this

¹ [See Hazlitt's "Handbook," 1867, p 129, *v* costume,
No 3 The phrase seems to be used here to signify ex-
pensive foreign fashions generally]

² The 4to reads *grace* The alteration by Mr Doddsley

That I will be ready and never will miss
 To assist thee still in working thy purpose,
 To th' advancing of thee, and depressing thy foes.

PERV DOC Gramercy, good sister, even with
 all my heart,

For this your good counsel, and for my part,
 Whatsoever in this case may be possibly done,
 I shall follow your precepts as a natural son
 For the matter so stands, if we look not well about,
 That we quite perish all out of doubt,
 Unless some such way we take out of hand,
 Whereby we may be able our foes to withstand
 And for this cause my brother Ignorance and I,
 Lest it should chance us to fall into jeopardy,
 Through envy of our names in any man's ear
 For this intent, I say, we did diligently care
 Our names to counterfeit in such manner of sort,
 That wherever we go we may win good report

HYPOCRISY Of my faith, that is very well done
 indeed !

God send thee a good wit still at thy need
 And that in thy doings such success thou may'st
 find,

That all things may chance to thee after thy mind
 My brother, if thou have ought else for to say,
 Speak on, ere that I depart hence away

PERV DOC Great thanks for your counsel, and
 if ye chance to go thither,
 You may meet with Ignorance, to hasten him
 hither

HYPOCRISY Farewell he shall be here, you
 shall see, even anon [Exit

PERV DOC Alack, alack, now my good sister is
 gone,

Whose presence to enjoy is more pleasant unto me,
 That any thing whatsoever in the world could be
 Good occasion have I such a sister to embrace,

For by her means I live and enjoy this place
Which yet I possess as long as I may,
And have heretofore many a fair day
For since these new heretics, the devil take them
all,

In all corners began to bark and to bawl
At the Catholic faith and the old religion,
Making of them both but matters of derision,
Hypocrisy hath so helped at every need,
That but for her hardly were we like for to speed
For be our case never so nigh driven to the worst,
Though her means by some means take no place at
the first

Yet some means doth she find, by some means at
the length,
That her ways do prevail, and her matters get
strength.

She can find out a thousand guiles in a trice,
For every purpose a new strong device
No matter so difficile for man to find out,
No business so dangerous, no person so stout,
But of th' one she is able a solution to make,
And th' other's great peril and mood for to slake
And in fine, much matter in few words to contain,
She can find out a cloak for every iain ¹

What person is there, that beareth more sway
In all manner of matters at this present day
Throughout the whole world, though of simple
degree,

And of small power to sight she seem for to be ²
Consider all trades and conditions of life,
Then shall you perceive that Hypocrisy is rife
To all kind of men and of every age,
So far as their years them therein may give know-
ledge.

¹ A proverb. *Tu hai mantillo di ogni acqua* —S.

Lo, here a large field, where at length he may walk,
Who list of this matter at the full for to talk
To declare of what power and of what efficacy.
In every age, country and time is Hypocrisy
But I may not about such small points now stand
The affairs they be greater, that I have in hand
Ignorance is the cause that I so long tarry here,
And behold where the blind buzzard doth appear
Come on, thou gross-headed knave, thou whoreson
 ass, I say,
Where hast thou been, since we departed to-day?

Enter IGNORANCE

IGNORANCE Where have I been, quod you
 marry, even there I was,
Whereas I would have given an hundred pound, by
 the mass,
To have been here, for never, since the day I was
 born,
Was I so near-hand in pieces for to have been
 torn
For as I was going up and down in the street,
To see if I could with Hypocrisy meet,
Behold, afar off I began to espy
That heretic New Custom, with another in his
 company
As soon as they saw me, they hied them apace,
Came towards, and met me full in the face
I am glad we have found you then, quod this
 heretic knave,
For you and your fellow this day sought we have
In every place, and now cannot you fly,
And with these words both they came very nigh.
Whereat I so feared, I may tell you plain,
That I thought at that hour I should have been
 slain

This is he, quod the varlet, of whom I told you of late,

An enemy of the truth, and incensed with hate
Against God and his church, and an imp of Hypo-
cisy,

A foe to the gospel and to true divinity
Thou liest, heretic, quod I, and nought else could I
say,

But brake quickly from them, and hither came
away

PERV DOC Who is he that was with him, Sim-
plicity, canst thou tell?

IGNORANCE Not I, sure, but some call him the
Light of the Gospel

A good personable fellow, and in countenance so
bright,

That I could not behold him in the visage aright

PERV DOC God's precious wounds, that slave!
marry, fie on him, fie!

Body of our Lord, is he come into the country?

I think all the heretics in the world have taken in
hand

By some solemn oath to pester this land,
With their wicked schisms and abominable sects,
Now a vengeance on them all, and the devil break
their necks!

Light of the Gospel! light of a straw! yet what-
ever he be,

I would he were hanged as high as I can see

IGNORANCE What, have you heard of him be-
fore this?

PERV DOC Heard of him? yea, that have I
often, i-wis

If there be any in the world, it is this whoreson
thief,

Believe me, Simplicity, that will work us the mis-
chief

Hath that same new Jack got him such a mate ?
 Now with all my heart a pestilence on his pate ¹
 I would they were both hanged fairly together,
 Or else were at the devil, I care not much whether
 For since these Genevan doctors came so fast into
 this land,

Since that time it was never merry with England.
 First came New Custom, and he gave the onsay ¹
 And sithens things have gone worse every day.
 But, Simplicity, dost thou know what is mine
 intent ?

IGNORANCE Tell me, and I shall know what
 you have meant

PERV DOC Our matters with Cruelty our friend
 to discuss,

And to hear him, what counsel in this case he will
 give us,

And this is the cause I have tarried for thee,
 Because that to him I would have thee go with me,
 But see where he cometh with Avarice sadly walking,
 Let us listen, if we can, whereof they be talking

ACTUS II, SCENA 3

CRUELTY, AVARICE *enter* PERVERSE DOCTRINE
and IGNORANCE *tarry*

CRUELTY Nay, by God's heart, if I might do
 what I list,
 Not one of them all that should 'scape my fist
 His nails,² I would plague them one way or another

¹ *i e*, The onset —S

² *i e*, God's nails So afterwards "By his wounds"—
 "His blood"—without repetition of the sacred name by
 way of introduction —S.

I would not miss him, no, if he were mine own brother

With small faults I might bear as I saw occasion,
And punish or forgive at mine own discretion,
For I wot that sometime the wisest may fall,
But heresy—fie on that, that is the greatest of all
Every stocks should be full, every prison and jail
Some would I beat with rods, some scourge at a
cart's tail,

Some house their heels upward, some beat in a sack,

Some manacle their fingers, some bind in the rack
Some would I starve for hunger, some would I hang
privily,

Saying, that themselves so died desperately
Some would I accuse of matters of great weight,
Openly to hang them as trespassers straight
A thousand mo ways could I tell, and not miss,
Which here in England, I may say to you, I have
practised ere this,

And trust, by His wounds, Avarice, soon again for
to try,

Howsoever the world go, before that I die

AVARICE Now I will tell thee, Cruelty, by God's
sacrament I have swore,

It were pity but thou were hanged before

CRUELTY Ha, ha, ha ; I had as lief they were
hanged as I

By the mass, there is one thing makes me laugh
heartily, ha, ha, ha

AVARICE I pray thee what is that ?

CRUELTY What ? ha, ha, ha, I cannot tell for
laughing, I would never better pastime desire,
Than to hear a dozen of them howling together in
the fire,

Whose noise, as me-thinketh, I could best compare
To a cry of hounds following after the hare,

Or a rabblement of bandogs barking at a bear
Ha, ha, ha

AVARICE I beshrew thy knave's fingers with
my very heart,
The devil will reward thee, whose darling thou
• art

But sirrah, I pray thee—

If it had chanced me in those days in thy hands to
have fell,

I think sure thou wouldst have ordered me well

CRUELTY His blood, I would I might have once
seen that chance,

I would have vexed thee with a vengeance, for old
acquaintance

AVARICE Why so? I was always thy furrerer
in those days, I am sure

CRUELTY Yea, but what was the cause? thine
own profit to procure

For so that thou mightest 'vantage and lucre obtain,
Thou wouldest not stick to bring thine own brother
to pain.

AVARICE Ha, ha, ha, no, nor father and mother,
if there were ought to be got,

Thou mightest swear, if I could, I would bring
them to the pot

Whereof a like history I shall tell thee, Cruelty,
In England, which myself played in the days of
queen Mary¹

Two brothers there were dwelling, young gentle-
men, but the heir

Had substantial revenues, his stock also was fair,

¹ In Fox's third volume of "Ecclesiastical History," 1630, p 799, is an account of one Richard Woodman who was burnt at Lewes, with nine others, on the 22d of June 1557. The circumstances attending his apprehension resemble those above-mentioned, and seem to be the same as are alluded to by the author of this morality

A man of good conscience, and studious of the Gospel

Which the other brother perceiving very well,
Persuaded him by all means, since he was so bent,
To be constant in opinion, and not to relent,
Which done, he gave notice to the officers about,
How they should come with search to find his
brother out,

Who, when he was once in this sort apprehended,
Shortly after his life in the fire he ended
The other had the most part of all his living—
How say'st, sir knave? is not this the near way to
thriving?

CRUELTY, O unreasonable Avarice, unsatiable
with gain

AVARICE. What [of] this? ¹ tush, it was but a
merry train.

CRUELTY For lucre's sake his own brother to
betray?

Hence, Judas, with these doings I cannot away ²

AVARICE I was ever with him, still ready at
hand,

Continually suggesting of the house and the land
And yet to tell you the truth, as indeed the thing is,
Of my conscience I think the best part was his

CRUELTY By God's glorious wounds, he was
worthy of none,

¹ *i. e.*, What of this?

² An expression of dislike or aversion used by almost every writer of the times Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, A IV S 5—"Of all nymphs i'the court, *I cannot away with her*"

Poetaster, A III S 4—"And do not bring your eating player with you there, *I cannot away with her*"

Eartholomew Fair, A I S 6—"Good 'faith, I will eat heartily too, because I will be no Jew, *I could never away with that stiff-necked generation*" [Gifford's edit IV 400-1]

But thou to be whipped for thy greedily suggestion.

AVARICE Heart of God, man, be the means
better or worse,

I pass not, I, so it be good for the purse.

Ha, ha, ha !

Enter from behind PERVERSE DOCTRINE and
IGNORANCE

PERV DOC If you love the purse so well, Avarice,
as you say indeed,

Then help me with your counsel now at a need.

AVARICE What, Perverse Doctrine, and Ignorance too, were you both so near ?

We had thought at our coming that no man had
been here

IGNORANCE We have been in this place ever
since that you stayed,

And we have heard also whatsoever you have said

CRUELTY. Welcome both, on my faith, and I am
glad it was our chance

To meet with you here, Perverse Doctrine and
Ignorance

Why, how go'th the world ? me-thinks you be sad

PERV DOC Marry, God have mercy, but there
is small cause to be glad

For except you come speedily with your helping
hand,

No doubt we shall shortly be banished the land

AVARICE Why so, Perverse Doctrine ?

CRUELTY I pray thee, let me understand.

PERV DOC Why so ! you know . how, since
heresy came lately in place,

And New Custom, that vile schismatic, began to
deface

All our old doings, our service, our rites, that of
yore

Have been of great price in the old time before
Ourselves have been enforced almost for to fly
The country, or else covertly in some corner to lie
CRUELTY By the mass, that is true, for I daie
not appear,

Whosoever would give me twenty pounds lands by
the year

AVARICE, Ha, ha, ha, by God's foot, and I was
never in better case in my life,
For covetousness with the clergy was never so rife
Wherefore I have no cause in such sort to be grieved,
Yet I would I could tell, sus, how you might be
relieved

PERV Doc Now, sirrah, to mend up this matter
withal

Precious God, it frets me to the very gall
For now of late that slave, that varlet, that heretic,
Light of the Gospel,

Is come over the sea, as some credibly tell,
Whom New Custom doth use in all matters as a
stay,

The most enemy to us in the world alway,
Whose rancour is such, and so great is his spite,
That no doubt he will straightway banish us quite,
Unless we provide some remedy for the contrary,
And with speed, this is truth that I tell thee,
Cruelty

CRUELTY His wounds, heart and blood, is he
come without any nay?

IGNORANCE Yea verily, for with these eyes I
saw him to-day

CRUELTY Now I would he were here, I would
so dress the slave,
That I warrant he should bear me a mark to his
grave

First I would buffet him thus, then give him a fall,
Afterward I would dash out his brains at the wall

AVARICE Hold your hands, you rude knave, or
by God's body I swear,

I will quickly fetch my fist from your ear

PERV DOC Tush, tush, it avails nought to
chafen, or to chide,

It were more wisdom with speed some redress to
provide

CRUELTY Redress? now, by God's guts, I will
never stay,

Till I find means to rid the beast out of the way

I will cut him off the slampams,¹ I hold him a
crown,

Wheresoever I meet him, in country or town

IGNORANCE What order you will take, it were
best make relation,

For mo wits, as you know, may do better than one

CRUELTY I will do then whatsoever shall come
in my head,

I force not, I,² so the villain were dead

IGNORANCE And of my furtherance, whatsoever
I may do, you be sure,

Your good state again, if I can, to procure,

With my uttermost help to suppress yonder rascal,

For, by the mass, you papists I like best of all

PERV DOC Then can we not do amiss, I conjecture
lightly,

For where as all these come, Perverse Doctrine

Avarice, Ignorance and Cruelty

There goeth the hare,³ except all good luck go
away—

But, sirs, it is good, lest your names you descry,

¹ [Beat him by stratagem See Halliwell's Dict in 2]

² *ie*, I care not Camden in his "Remains" says, I
force not of such fooleries" Shakspeare has the same
phrase —S

³ [In that direction sets the tide of opinion This saying
is in Heywood's collection, 1562]

To transpose them after some other kind,
Else be sure with the people much hatred to find
As for Perverse Doctrine, Sound Doctrine, for
Ignorance, Simplicity.

With these colours of late ourselves cloaked have
we

CRUELTY What then shall I, Cruelty, be called
in your judgment?

PERV DOC Marry, Justice with Severity, a
virtue most excellent

AVARICE What will you term Avarice, I pray
you let me hear?

PERV DOC Even Frugality, for to that virtue
it cometh most near

AVARICE Content, by his wounds, I, but we
must look to our feet,

Lest we stumble in these names, whensoever we
meet

PERV DOC Yea, see you take heed to that in
any manner of case,

So may you delude the people in every place

CRUELTY Come then, it is time hence that away
we depart

IGNORANCE. We are ready to follow with a most
willing heart

AVARICE But, sirs, because we have tarried so
long,

If you be good fellows, let us depart with a song

CRUELTY I am pleased, and therefore let every
man

Follow after in order, as well as he can

The first SONG.

Well handled, by the mass, on every side
Come, Avarice, for we two will no longer abide.

[Exit Cruelty and Avarice]

PERV DOC Farewell to you both, and God
 send you success,
 Such as may glad us all in your present business
 Now they be departed, and we may not tarry,
 For it lieth us upon all to be stirring, by Samt
 May

New Custom prevaileth much everywhere,
 But, no matter, they be fools that do give him such
 ear

Let old custom prevail rather, it is better than new .
 This all will confess, that think scripture is true
 Do as thy fathers have done before thee (quoth he)
 Then shalt thou be certain in the right way to be
 And sure that is better than to follow the train,
 That each man inventeth of his own proper brain
 Which hath brought the world to this case, as we
 see,

That every day we hear of some notorious heresy
 Yet all is the Gospel, whatsoever they say
 Well, if it chance that a dog hath a day,
 Wo then to New Custom and all his mates, tush
 tush,

No man the Gospel will esteem then a rush
 What will that other heretic do, Light of the Gospel.
 I pray ?

Dare not once show his face more than we at this
 day

But come, Ignorance, let us follow after apace,
 For we have abiden all too long in this place
 IGNORANCE. Let us go then, but, by the mass.

I am vengeance dry,
 I pray let us drink at the alehouse hereby.

PERV DOC Content, in faith, thither with speed
 let us hie.

ACTUS III, SCENA 1

LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL, NEW CUSTOM, PERVERSE
DOCTRINE

L OF GOSPEL They be not this way, as far as I
can see,
Unless they have hidden themselves up privily
For in presence of Light of the Gospel and Primi-
tive Constitution,
Undoubtedly such reprobates can have no habita-
tion

NEW CUS Verily I do find it so even as you
have said,
For at your sight they all fly away as dismayed
Wherefore I have great cause to give you thanks,
Light
Of the Gospel, that put thus my enemies to flight
L OF GOSPEL Nay, they be my enemies also,
that be enemies to you
Insomuch as your dealings be both virtuous and
true

For what is the Gospel else, whereof I am Light,
But truth, equity, verity and right?
They be enemies to God too, and all hairs impure,
Insomuch as he is called Verity in the scripture
And the lying lips, with speakers of vanity,
The Lord himself will revenge with extremity
But see, what is he that approacheth so nigh?

NEW CUS Of whom I told you it is Perverse
Doctrine verily

L OF GOSPEL Then let us a little step out of
the way,
If haply we may hear what he will say
PERV DOC Ah, sirrah, by my troth, there is a
very good vein!

Ignorance hath well lined his cap for the rain '
 I could have tarried longer there with a good will,
 But, as the proverb saith, it is good to keep still
 One head for the reckoning, both sober and wise ,
 Wherefore in this thing I have followed that guise
 Ignorance is but a dolt, it is I that must drudge,
 For need (they say) maketh the old wife and man
 both to trudge ¹

Such snares we shall lay for these heretics, I trust
 That New Custom and his fellows shall soon be in
 the dust

If Cruelty may prevail, he will never slack,
 Till he have brought a thousand of them to a stake
 Avarice hath promised to do what in him lay,
 Who hath been in great credit with the world
 always

But if Ignorance may get place, there shall we do
 well,

Then adieu all idle heretics and vain talk of the
 gospel '
 For me Perverse Doctrine, thus shall be my fetch,²
 To keep constant the minds of all I can catch,
 Lest these glossers sometime they chance to hear
 preaching,

And thereby be converted, and credit then
 teaching
 For I trust shortly to bring it to pass,
 That less knowledge of the Gospel shall serve, by
 the mass

L OF GOSPEL Let us inclose him, that he may
 not fly,

Else will he be gone, when he doth us espy
 O imp of Antichrist, and seed of the devil '

¹ [The usual form of the proverb is, 'Need maketh the old wife trot']

² [Exertion, effort]

Born to all wickedness, and nusled¹ in all evil

PERV. DOC. Nay, thou stinking heretic, art thou
there indeed?

According to thy naughtiness thou must look for
to speed.

NEW CUS. God's holy worl in no wise can be
heresy,

Though so you term it never so falsely

PERV. DOC. Ye precious whoreson, art thou
there too?

I think you have pretended some harm me to do

Help, help, I say, let me be gone at once,

Else I will smite thee in the face with my fist, by
God's bones.

NEW CUS. You must be contented a little
season to stay.

Light of the Gospel for your profit hath something
to say

PERV. DOC. I will hear none of your preachings,
I promise you plain;

For whatever you speak, it is but in vain

L OF GOSPEL In vain it shall not be spoken,
I know very well

For God hath always given such power to his
gospel,

That wherever or by whom declared it be,

It should redound unto his own honour and glory

God is glorified in those whom he doth elect,

God is glorified in those also whom he doth reject

The elect are saved by that in the world they
believe,

But the other, because no credence they give

To the truth, cannot be but blameable,

Committing a fault of all faults most damnable

For, *Si ad eos non venissem*, saith Christ our Saviour,

¹ i e, Nursed, fostered —S

If I had not come unto them with the word, this
is sure,

In far better case the unfaithful had been
For in this one respect they had had no sin
But where the truth is, and yet there contemned,
Of Christ his own mouth all such are condemned
Thus the gospel of Christ, be it received or no,
Showeth the glory of God, wheresoever it go

PERV DOC I were content to abide, and know
your pleasure

But for business at this time I have no leisure

L OF GOSPEL What leisure ought a man at all
times more to have,

Than to endeavour both his body and soul for to
save?

NEW CUS For that care all other cares we
must set aside

PERV DOC Say on, then, for patiently I mind to
abide

L OF GOSPEL Not to hear what is spoken is
only sufficient,

But to put it in practice with sincere intent
Whatsoever is taught us concerning good-doing,
Expressing it plainly in our virtuous living

PERV. DOC Why, what would you have me in
living express?

L OF GOSPEL Even the gospel, which is nothing
else, doubtless,

But amendment of life and renouncing of sin
With displeasure toward yourself for the faults you
were in

PERV DOC How shall I displease myself in
sin, I would know?

L OF GOSPEL In considering that nothing
bringeth man so low

Out of God's favour, as sin nothing setteth him
so high,

As loathing the same, and calling to him for his
mercy

PERV DOC Verily I am sorry for my forepassed
demeanour,

But that cannot avail me but little, I am sure

L OF GOSPEL Why think you so? boldly tell
me your mind

PERV DOC. Because God's mercy is far enough
behind

L OF GOSPEL. God's mercy is at hand, if you
repent faithfully

PERV DOC I repent my sins, and for them am
sorry heartily,

But how shall I be sure mercy for to obtain?

L OF GOSPEL. Credit me truly, for my words
are not vain,

I am Light of the Gospel, and have full authority
To pronounce to the penitent forgiveness of
iniquity,

So that, in asking, you put your assurance to speed.
Then no doubt you have obtained mercy indeed

PERV DOC This assurance how cometh it,
declare, I pray you?

L OF GOSPEL In thinking that Christ his words
and promises are true,

And as he cannot deceive, so cannot be deceived,
Which faith of all Christians must needs be received

PERV DOC What thing is faith, I pray you
recite?

L OF GOSPEL A substance of things not appear-
ing in sight,

Yet which we look for, for so Saint Paul doth
define,

To the Hebrews, the eleventh chapter and the first
line.

PERV. DOC How to purchase this faith, I would
I could tell

L OF GOSPEL Certainly by me also, the Light
of the Gospel,
For faith cometh by the word, when we read or
hear,

As by the same Saint Paul it doth plainly appear
•PERV DOC Give me leave then to embrace
you, I pray you heartily

L OF GOSPEL With all my very heart, I receive
you courteously

PERV DOC To thee I give most humble thanks.
O God immortal,

That it hath pleased thee me from my wickedness
to call,

And where as I deserved no mercy, but judgment,
Yet to pour down thy pardon on me most abund-
ant,

Revoking me from reprobates and members of hell,
To win me in society with the Light of the Gospel

L OF GOSPEL Stand up, there is somewhat else
yet behind

PERV DOC I wholly yield myself to you • use
me after your mind

L OF GOSPEL Perverse Doctrine you shall be
called no more after this,

But Sincere Doctrine, as now I trust your true
name is

PERV DOC By God's grace, while I live, I will
so endeavour,

That my life and my name may accord thus for
ever

L OF GOSPEL Then all wicked company you
must clean forsake,

And fly their society as a toad or a snake

PERV DOC I abandon them quite, whatsoever
they be

NEW CUS Well, Sincere Doctrine, hearken also
unto me,

Whom needs you must follow, if you will do well,
 Since you have embraced the Light of the Gospel
 I am not New Custom, as you have been misled,
 But am Primitive Constitution, from the very head
 Of the church, which is Christ and his disciples all,
 And from the fathers, at that time taking original
 By me then you must learn for your own behest,
 And for all vocations what is judged the best

PERV DOC I receive you gladly with thanks for
 your gentleness,
 At you hands craving earnestly for my trespass
 forgiveness.

NEW CUS. It is easily forgiven

PERV DOC Now as touching my apparel,
 what counsel do you give ?

For I see well that, in the constitution primitive,
 They used no such garment as I have on here,
 But fashioned it after some other manner

NEW CUS So did they truly, I confess it
 indeed,
 But in such things a man ought not to take so great
 heed,

For the wearing of a gown, cap, or any other gar-
 ment,

Surely is a matter, as me-seemeth, indifferent,
 Howbeit, wise princes, for a difference to be had,
 Hath commanded the clergy in such sort to be
 clad,

But he who puts his religion in wearing the thing,
 Or thinks himself more holy for the contrary doing,
 Shall prove but a fool, of whatever condition
 He be, for sure that is but mere superstition
 Other things there be, which have been abused,
 Tolerable enough, if well they were used

Wherefore use your apparel, as is comely and decent,
 And not against scripture anywhere in my judg-
 ment

L OF GOSPEL No, sure for God weigheth not
 (who is a spite)
 Of any vesture or outward appearance a mite,
 So the conscience be pure, and to no sin a slave
 That is all which he most gladly would have
 NEW CUS Well, these having declared and
 sufficiently taught,
 And, I trust, on your part perceived as they ought
 By your patience, I mind to depart for a season
 L OF GOSPEL If your business be so, it is but
 reason
 NEW CUS With great thanks unto you, Light
 of the Gospel for the gentleness I have found,
 At your hands, as of due desert I am bound
 L OF GOSPEL The Lord be your guide, whither-
 soever you depart
 PERV DOC Humble thanks, sir, I yield you
 from the bottom of my heart
 Albeit in this part so small be my skill,
 That I may not perform them according to my
 will
 NEW CUS The peace of God be with you both
 for evermore [Exit

EDIFICATION *entereth*

Wheresoever Light of the Gospel goeth before
 There I, Edification, do follow incontinent,
 As unto the same a necessary consequent
 For though the letter always work not that effect,
 Yet surely in the congregation of God's elect,
 Where the light and force taketh place, there Edi-
 fication
 Of all right must I make my habitation
 Endeavour then always me to retain,
 So shall your doctrine not be given in vain
 VOL. III L

PERV DOC I receive you most gladly, and I
trust in the Lord,

That for ever hereafter we shall well accord

EDIFICATION I trust so

L OF GOSPEL Fare you well, now you are not
alone,

For this small while I must needs be gone

Here, take at my hands this Testament-book,

And in mine absence therein I pray you earnestly
look

PERV DOC Your commandment shall be done,
with thanks for your counsel

L OF GOSPEL Then shall ye sure find great
delight in the gospel [Exit

ASSURANCE *entereth.*

Edification without Assurance 'vailleth not much
Yet where they both do meet, surely their force is
such,

That to God's kingdom they open the way,

The sweet place of rest and perpetual joy

For assurance in Christ Jesus without man's further
merit,

Is fully sufficient God's favour to inherit

Wherefore Light of the Gospel willed me so,

That to you, Edification, with all speed I should
go

So that with Sincere Doctrine we joined in unity,
Might in short time conduct him to God's Perfect
Felicity

PERV DOC I embrace you, Assurance, that bliss
to obtain.

ASSURANCE Then be you assured, that you shall
not be vain,

For if that Christ's words be faithful and just,
God's Perfect Felicity is not far hence, I trust

GOD'S FELICITY *entereth*

Verily, where Edification and Assuance in one are
allied,

God's Felicity is at hand, it may not be denied,
Which he promiseth to such as unfeignedly crave,
With Assurance that certainly the same they shall
have

Which Felicity in person here I do represent,
Who by God himself to the faithful am sent,
Prepared for them, as he plainly hath said,
Since the time that the world's foundations were
laid,

Wherefore great thanks unto him doubtless you owe
That it would please him such gifts on you to bestow.
The most precious thing, which man's reason doth
excel,

No mind can conceive, much less tongue can tell
PERV DOC To him therefore let us give all
inanner praise,

That beareth such affection to mankind always
O Lord, thine honour might be great in heaven so
high

And throughout the whole earth thy everlasting
glory

Give grace to thy people, that after this transitory
Life they may come to thy perfect felicity

EDIFICATION Defend thy church, O Christ, and
thy holy congregation,

Both here in England and in every other nation
That we thy truth may attam, and still follow the
same,

To the salvation of our souls, and glory of thy name
ASSURANCE Preserve our noble queen Eliza-
beth and her council all,¹

¹ It was a custom at the end of our ancient interludes and plays to conclude with a solemn prayer for the king or

With thy heavenly grace, sent from thy seat
 supernal
 Giant her and them long to live, her to reign, them
 to see,
 What may always be best for the weal-public's
 commodity¹

The second SONG

queen, the council, the parliament, or the nobleman by whom the players were protected. Many instances are produced by Dr Farmer and Mr Steevens, in their last notes on the epilogue to "Second Part of Henry IV," and many others might be added. See particularly the conclusion of Fulwell's "Like will to like, quoth the Devil to the Collier," 1368, Wager's "The longer thou livest the more foole thou art," "King Darius," and others — *Reed*

¹ [Interest]

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER

A COMEDY

BY NICHOLAS UDALL

(1550)

[The only copy known of this admirable comedy, and that deficient of the title, was discovered in 1818, and is at present in the library of Eton College. It was reprinted in 1818, again in 1821 and 1830, and for the fourth time, with a copious account of Udall and his writings, by Mr W. D. Cooper, 1847. It was licensed and probably printed in 1566, but is quoted in Wilson's "Rule of Reason," 1551, before which date it was no doubt not only composed but performed.]

"Ralph Roister Doister" is the first regular comedy in our language—a place of honour long held by "Gammer Gurton's Needle," which is an inferior, as well as a later, production.

Since the appearance of Mr Cooper's edition, Mr Furnivall has printed from the Royal MS. the pageant referred to at p. xiii of Mr Cooper's introduction in one of the Ballad Society's volumes.]

THE PROLOGUE

What creature is in health, either young or old,
But some mirth with modesty will be glad to use,
As we in this interlude shall now unfold^t
Wherein all scurrility we utterly refuse,
Avoiding such mirth, wherein is abuse
Knowing nothing more commendable for a man's
recreation,
Than mirth which is used in an honest fashion

For mirth prolongeth life, and causeth health,
Mirth recreates our spirits, and voideth pensiveness,
Mirth increaseth amity (not hind'ring our wealth),
Mirth is to be used both of more and less,
Being mixed with virtue in decent comeliness,
As we trust no good nature can gainsay the same
Which mirth we intend to use, avoiding all blame

The wise poets, long time heretofore,
Under merry comedies secrets did declare,
Wherein was contained very virtuous lore,
With mysteries and forewarnings very rare
Such to write neither Plautus nor Terence did
spare,
Which among the learned at this day bears the
bell
These with such other therein did excel.

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER.

ACTUS I, SCÆNA 1

MATTHEW MERRYGREEK. *He entereth singing*

As long liveth the merry man (they say),
As doth the sorry man, and longer by a day,
Yet the grasshopper, for all his summer piping,
Starveth in winter with hungry griping
Therefore another said saw doth men advise,
That they be together both merry and wise
This lesson must I practise or else, ere long,
With me, Matthew Merrygreek, it will be wrong
Indeed men so call me, for, by him that us bought,
Whatever chance betide, I can take no thought
Yet wisdom would that I did myself bethink,
Where to be provided this day of meat and drink,
For know ye that, for all this merry note of mine,
He might oppose me now, that should ask where I
dine
My living lieth here and there, of God's grace,
Sometime with this good man, sometime in that
place,
Sometime Lewis Loiterer biddeth me come near,
Somewhiles Watkin Waster maketh us good cheer,
Sometime Davy Diceplayer, when he hath well
cast,

Maketh revel-rout, as long as it will last ,
 Sometime Tom Titivile¹ maketh us a feast ,
 Sometime with Sir Hugh Pie I am a bidden guest ,
 Sometime at Nichol Neverthrive's I get a sop ,
 Sometime I am feasted with Bryan Blinkinsop ,
 Sometime I hang on Hankyn⁵ Hoddydoddy's sleev^c ,
 But this day on Ralph Roister Doister's, by his
 leave

For truly of all men he is my chief banker,
 Both for meat and money, and my chief shoot-
 anchor²

Foisooth Roister Doister in that he doth say,
 And require what ye will, ye shall have no nay
 But now of Roister Doister somewhat to express,
 That ye may esteem him after his worthiness,
 In these twenty towns, and seek them throughout,
 Is not the like stock whereon to graff a lout
 All the day long is he facing and craking³
 Of his great acts in fighting and fray-making ,
 But when Roister Doister is put to his proof,
 To keep the Queen's peace⁴ is more for his behoof
 If any woman smile, or cast on him an eye,
 Up is he to the hard ears in love by and by
 And in all the hot haste must she be his wife,

¹ One of the names of the devil in the old morals —
W. D. Cooper

² [Sheet-anchor]

³ Impudently vaunting and boasting

"You preserve
 A race of idle people here about you,
 Faces and talkers — *Maid's Tragedy*, Act iv sc 2
 — *W. D. Cooper*

⁴ In all probability an alteration to mean Elizabeth, in whose reign the play was printed, for in act iii, sc 4, M Merrygreek talks of the "arms of Calais", and so does R Roister, act iv, sc 7 Calais was lost in 5th May, and the play was quoted by Wilson in 1551, when Edward was on the throne — *W. D. Cooper*

Else farewell his good days, and farewell his life !
 Master Ralph Roister Doister is but dead and gone,
 Except she on him take some compassion
 Then chief of council must be Matthew Merry-
 greek !

What, if I for marriage to such an one seek ?
 Then must I sooth¹ it, whatever it is,
 For what he saith or doth cannot be amiss
 Hold by his yea and nay, be his nown white son²
 Praise and rouse him well, and ye have his heart
 won,

For so well liketh he his own fond fashions,
 That he taketh pride of false commendations
 But such sport have I with him, as I would not
 lese,
 Though I should be bound to live with bread and
 cheese

For exalt him and have him as ye lust indeed,
 Yea, to hold his finger in a hole for a need
 I can with a word make him fain or loth,
 I can with as much make him pleased or wioth,
 I can, when I will, make him merry and glad,
 I can, when me lust, make him sorry and sad,
 I can set him in hope, and eke in despair;
 I can make him speak rough, and make him speak
 fair

But I marvel I see him not all this same day
 I will seek him out But lo! he cometh this way
 I have yond espied him sadly coming,
 And in love, for twenty pound, by his glomming³

¹ [Affirm, agree to it]

² [i e, His own white son] *White boy* is a common expression of endearment in old plays, and to this day white-headed boy is an expression of fondness in Ireland, though the locks of the individual to whom it is applied may be "black as the raven's plume"—*W D Cooper*

³ [Or glombling, i e, louring See Halliwell v *Glombe*]

ACTUS I, SCÆNA 2

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER, MATTHEW
MERRYGREEK

R ROISTER Come, death, when thou wilt I
am weary of my life

M. MERRY I told you, I, we should woo another
wife. *[Aside*

R ROISTER Why did God make me such a
goodly person ?

M. MERRY He is in, by the week, we shall
have sport anon *[Aside*

R ROISTER. And where is my trusty friend,
Matthew Merrygreek ?

M. MERRY I will make as I saw him not, he
doth me seek *[Aside*

R ROISTER I have him espied, me-thinketh,
yond is he,

Ho ! Matthew Merrygreek, my friend, a word
with thee

M MERRY I will not hear him, but make as I
had haste *[Aside*

Farewell, all my good friends, the time away doth
waste,

And the tide, they say, tarneth for no man

R ROISTER Thou must with thy good counsel
help me, if thou can.

M MERRY God keep thee, worshipful Master
Roister Doister,

And farewell the lusty Master Roister Doister

R ROISTER. I must needs speak with thee a
word or twain

M MERRY, Within a month or two I will be
here again

Negligence in great affairs, ye know, may mar all

R. ROISTER. Attend upon me now, and well reward thee I shall

M MERRY. I have take my leave, and the tide is well-spent

R ROISTER I die, except thou help, I pray thee be content ~

Do thy part well now, and ask what thou wilt,
For without thy aid my matter is all spilt

M MERRY Then to serve your turn I will some pains take,

And let all mine own affairs alone for your sake

R ROISTER. My whole hope and trust resteth only in thee

M MERRY Then can ye not do amiss, whatever it be

R ROISTER Grameicies, Mennygreek, most bound to thee I am

M MERRY But up with that heart, and speak out like a ram,

Ye speak like a capon that had the cough now
Be of good cheer, anon ye shall do well enou'

R. ROISTER Upon thy comfort I will all things well handle

M MERRY So, lo! that is a breast to blow out a candle ¹

But what is this great matter, I would fain know?
We shall find remedy therefore, I trow

Do ye lack money? ye know mine old offers
Ye have always a key to my purse and coffers

R ROISTER I thank thee had ever man such a friend!

¹ Voice

"I syng not musycall,
For my *breast* is decayd"
—*A monye of By des*

M MERRY Ye give unto me I must needs to
you lend

R ROISTER Nay, I have money plenty all things
to discharge

M MERRY (*aside*) That knew I might well,
when I made offer so large

R ROISTER But it is no such matter

M MERRY What is it, then?

Are ye in danger of debt¹ to any man?

If ye be, take no thought, nor be not afraid,

Let them hardly take thought² how they shall be
paid

R ROISTER Tut, I owe nought

M MERRY What then? fear ye imprisonment?

R ROISTER No.

M MERRY. No, I wist ye offend not so to be
shent,

But, if ye had, the Tower could not you so hold,

But to break out at all times ye would be bold

What is it? hath any man threatened you to
beat?

R. ROISTER What is he that durst have put me
in that heat?

He that beateth me, by His arms,³ shall well find

That I will not be far from him, nor run behind

M MERRY That thing know all men, ever since
ye overthrew

The fellow of the lion which Hercules slew

But what is it then?

R ROISTER Of love I make my moan

M MERRY Ah, this foolish love! wil't ne'er let
us alone?

¹ [In danger of debt, *i.e.* in the power of any man on
account of debt]

² [*i.e.* Let *them* consider how, &c.]

³ [*i.e.* By God's arms]

But, because ye were refused the last day,
Ye said ye would ne'er more be entangled that way !
I would meddle no more, since I find all so unkind

R ROISTER Yea, but I cannot so put love out
of my mind

M MERRY But is your love, tell me first, in any
wise

In the way of marriage or of merchandise ?

If it may otherwise than lawful be found,

Ye get none of my help for an hundred pound

R ROISTER. No, by my troth, I would have her
to my wife

M MERRY Then are ye a good man, and God
save your life !

And what or who is she, with whom ye are in love ?

R ROISTER A woman, whom I know not by
what means to move

M MERRY Who is it ?

R ROISTER A woman yond

M MERRY What is her name ?

R ROISTER Her yonder

M MERRY Whom ?

R ROISTER. Mistress, ah—

M MERRY Fy, fy for shame !

Love ye, and know not whom ? but *her yond' a
woman !*

We shall then get you a wife, I cannot tell when

R ROISTER The fair woman that supped with
us yesternight,

And I heard her name twice or thrice, and had it
right

M MERRY Yea, ye may see ye ne'er take me to
good cheer with you

If ye had, I could have told you her name now

R ROISTER I was to blame indeed, but the
next time perchance—

And she dwelleth in this house—

M MERRY What, Christian Custance ?

R ROISTER Except I have her to my wife, I
I shall run mad

M MERRY Nay, unwise perhaps, but I warrant
you for mad ¹

R ROISTER. I am utterly dead, unless I have
my desire

M MERRY Where be the bellows that blew this
sudden fire ?

R ROISTER I hear she is worth a thousand
pound and more

M MERRY Yea, but learn this one lesson of me
afore

An hundred pound of marriage-money, doubtless,
Is ever thirty pound sterling, or somewhat less, ²
So that her thousand pound, if she be thrifty,
Is much near ³ about two hundred and fifty
Howbeit, wooers and widows are never poor

R. ROISTER Is she a widow ? I love her better
therefore

M MERRY But I hear she hath made promise
to another.

R ROISTER He shall go without her, and he
were my brother

M MERRY I have heard say, I am right well
advised,

That she hath to Gawin Goodluck promised

R ROISTER What is that Gawin Goodluck ?

M MERRY A merchant-man

R ROISTER Shall he speed afore me ? Nay,
sir, by sweet Saint Anne !

¹ [I warrant you, as far as madness is concerned Mr Cooper proposed to read *from mad*, but the alteration appears to me unnecessary]

² [Fortunes are always exaggerated]

³ [Nearer]

Ah, su¹ *Backare*, quod Mortimer to his sow¹
 I will have her mine own self, I make God a vow,
 For, I tell thee, she is worth a thousand pound

M MERRY Yet a fitter wife for your maship²
 might be found,
 Such a goodly man as you might get one with land,
 Besides pounds of gold a thousand and a thousand,
 And a thousand and a thousand and a thousand,
 And so to the sum of twenty hundied thousand
 Your most goodly personage is worthy of no less

R ROISTER I am sorry God made me so comely,
 doubtless,
 For that maketh me each where so highly favoured,
 And all women on me so enamoured

M MERRY Enamoured, quod you? have ye
 spied out that?
 Ah, su, mairy, now I see you know what is what
 Enamoured, ka³ mairy, su, say that again,
 But I thought not ye had marked it so plain

R ROISTER Yes, each where they gaze all upon
 me, and staie

M MERRY Yea, malkin, I wariant you, as
 much as they dare
 And ye will not believe what they say in the street,
 When your maship passeth by, all such as I meet,
 That sometimes I can scarce find what answer to
 make

Who is this? (saith one) Sir Launcelot du Lake?⁴
 Who is this? Great Guy of Warwick, saith another?

¹ This was a proverbial expression. See Heywood's
 'Proverbs' and "Taming of the Shrew," act II, sc 1
Backare probably means *Back there!* or *Go back!*—*Cooper*
 [The meaning is, clearly enough, that Gawin Goodluck
 must retreat from his courtship]

² Your mastership—*Cooper*

³ Quotha

⁴ Some of these are the heroes of romances—*Cooper*

No (say I), it is the thirteenth Hercules brother
 Who is this? noble Hector of Troy? saith the thud
 No, but of the same nest (say I) it is a bird
 Who is this? great Goliath, Sampson, or Colbrand?
 No (say I), but it is a brute of the aly land¹
 Who is this? great Alexander or Chaulemagne?
 No, it is the tenth Worthy, say I to them again
 I know not if I said well—

R ROISTER Yes, for so I am

M MERRY Yea, for there were but nine worthies,
 before ye came
 To some otheis the thud Cato I do you call,²
 And so, as well as I can, I answer them all
 Sir, I pray you what lord or great gentleman is this?
 Master Ralph Roister Doister, dame (say I), i-wis
 O Lord (saith she then), what a goodly man it is!
 Would Christ I had such a husband as he is!
 O Lord (say some), that the sight of his face we lack!
 It is enough for you (say I) to see his back,
 His face is for ladies of high and noble parages,
 With whom he hardly 'scapeth great marriages
 With much more than this and much otherwise

R ROISTER I can thee thank,⁴ that thou canst
 such answers devise

But I perceive thou dost me throughly know

M MERRY I mark your manneis for mine own
 learning, I trow

But such is your beauty, and such are your acts,
 Such is your personage, and such are your facts,⁵

¹ [A creature of the same country *Aly* seems here to be the same as *alyche* See Halliwell, *v v alyche* and *alye*]

² *Tertius à cælo cecidit Cato* Juv, *Sat* 11, 40 — *Cooper*

³ [Kindred, parentages]

⁴ I give thee thanks — *Cooper*

⁵ Feats or deeds, from the Latin *factum*, "And rattle forth his *facts* of war and blood" — Marlowe's "Tamburlaine the Great," Part I, 1590 — *Cooper*

That all women, fair and foul, more and less,
They eye you, they lub¹ you, they talk of you doubt-
less

Your pleasant look maketh them all merry
Ye pass not by, but they laugh, till they be weary .
Yea, and money could I have, the truth to tell,
Of many, to bring you that way where they dwell

R ROISTER Merrygreek, for this thy reporting
well of me—

M MERRY What should I else, sir? it is my
duty, pardè.

R ROISTER I promise thou shalt not lack,
while I have a groat

M MERRY Faith, sir, and I ne'er had more
need of a new coat

R ROISTER Thou shalt have one to-morrow,
and gold for to spend

M MERRY Then I trust to bring the day to a
good end

For as for mine own part, having money enou',
I could live only with the remembrance of you—
But now to your widow, whom you love so hot—

R ROISTER By Cock, thou sayest truth, I had
almost forgot

M MERRY What, if Christian Custance will
not have you, what?

R ROISTER Have me? yes, I warrant you,
never doubt of that

I know she loveth me, but she dare not speak

M MERRY Indeed, meet it were somebody
should it break

R ROISTER She looked on me twenty times
yesternight,

¹ [This word has escaped Nares and others But it is merely a colloquialism for *love*, and is in that sense still in familiar use]

And laughed so—

M MERRY. That she could not sit upright

R ROISTER No, faith, could she not

M MERRY No, even such a thing I cast ¹

R ROISTER But for wooing, thou knowest,
women are shamefast

But, and she knew my mind, I know she would be
glad,

And think it the best chance that ever she had

M MERRY To her, then, like a man, and be
bold forth to start

Wooers never speed well, that have a false heart

R ROISTER What may I best do ?

M MERRY, Sir, remain ye awhile [here], ²
Ere long one or other of her house will appear
Ye know my mind

R ROISTER Yea, now hardly let me alone

M MERRY In the meantime, sir, if you please,
I will home,

And call your musicians, for in this your case

It would set you forth, and all your wooing grace,
Ye may not lack your instruments to play and
sing

R ROISTER Thou knowest I can do that—

M MERRY As well as anything

Shall I go call your folks, that we may show a cast ?

R ROISTER Yea, run, I beseech thee, in all
possible haste,

M MERRY I go [Exeunt

R ROISTER Yea, for I love singing out of
measure,

It comforteth my spirits, and doth me great pleasure

¹ [Guessed]

² The word "here," which is not in the original, seems necessary to complete the metre and rhyme —Cooper

But who cometh forth yond from my sweetheart
Custance?
My matter frameth well, this is a lucky chance

ACTUS I, SCÆNA 3

MADGE MUMBLECRUST¹ *spinning on the distaff*
TIBET TALKAPACE *sowing*. ANNOT ALYFACE
knitting R ROISTER *behind*.

M MUMBL. If this distaff were spun, Margery
Mumblecrust—

TIB. TALK Where good stale ale is, will drink
no water, I trust

M MUMBL Dame Custance hath promised us
good ale and white bread

TIB TALK If she keep not promise, I will be-
shrew her head

But it will be stark night, before I shall have done

R ROISTER (*aside*) I will stand here awhile,
and talk with them anon

I hear them speak of Custance, which doth my heart
good,

To hear her name spoken doth even comfort my
blood

M MUMBL Sit down to your work, Tibet, like
a good girl

TIB TALK Nurse, meddle you with your spindle
and your whirl

¹ Jack Mumblecrust is the name of one of the beggars who dine with Sir Owen Meredith. "Peace! hear my lady Jack Mumblecrust steal no more penny loaves"—*Patience Grissel*, act iv, sc 3. It is also a name given to the widow Minever by Captain Tucca in Dekker's "*Satiromastix*." Madge Mumblecrust is mentioned in the MS comedy of "*Misogonus*," 1577—*Cooper*

No haste but good, Madge Mumbleciust, for whip
and whur,¹

The old proverb doth say, never made good fin
M MUMBL Well, ye will sit down to your work
anon, I trust

TIB TALK Soft fine maketh sweet malt,² good
Madge Mumbleciust

M MUMBL And sweet malt maketh jolly good
ale for the nonce

TIB TALK Which will slide down the lane³
without any bones [Cantet⁴

Old brown-bread crusts must have much good
mumbling,

But good ale down your throat hath good easy
tumbling

R. ROISTER (*aside*) The jolliest wench that ere
I heard! Little mouse,

May I not rejoice that she shall dwell in my house?

TIB TALK So, sirrah,⁵ now this gear beginneth
for to frame

M MUMBL Thanks to God, though your work
stand still, your tongue is not lame

TIB TALK And though your teeth be gone,
both so shap and so fine,

¹ Scolding "Whur, to snarl like a dog"—*Bailey*

² "Soft fier makes swet malt", see "The Marriage of
Wit and Wisdom," edited by Halliwell, p 13—*Cooper*

³ [The throat, which we still familiarly term *red lane*]

⁴ Songs introduced in our old plays are often not found
in the printed copies. Some of those in this piece, are,
however, given at the end, and others are introduced in the
body of the play. In the above instance, perhaps, only an
air was to be hummed—*Cooper*

⁵ The terms *Sirrah* and *Sir* appear to have been fre-
quently applied indifferently both to male and female. In
Whetstone's "Promos and Cassandra," 1578, Grymball says
to his mistress—

"Ah, *syr*, you woulde belike let my cocke sparrows go"—*Cooper*

Yet your tongue can renne on pattens as well as mine

M MUMBL Ye were not for nought named Tib Talkapace

TIB TALK Doth my talk grieve you? Alack, God save your grace!

M MUMBL I hold a groat, ye will drink anon for this gear

TIB TALK And I will not pray you the stripes for me to bear

M MUMBL I hold a penny, ye will drink without a cup

TIB TALK Whereinsoe'er ye drink, I wot ye drink all up

AN ALYFACE By Cock,¹ and well sewed, my good Tibet Talkapace

TIB TALK And e'en as well knit, my nown Annot Alyface

R ROISTER (*aside*) See what a sort she keepeth, that must be my wife

Shall not I, when I have her, lead a merry life?

TIB TALK Welcome, my good wench, and sit here by me just

AN ALYFACE And how doth our old beldame here, Madge Mumblecrust?

TIB TALK Chide and find fault, and threaten to complain

AN ALYFACE, To make us poor girls shent² to her is small gain

M MUMBL I did neither chide, nor complain, nor threaten

R ROISTER (*aside*) It would grieve my heart to see one of them beaten

¹ A corruption of the sacred name

² Scolded. It sometimes means *ruined* or *destroyed* —
Cooper

M MUMBL I did nothing but bid her work, and
hold her peace

TIB TALK So would I, if you could your clat-
tering cease,

But the devil cannot make old trot hold her tongue

AN ALYFACE Let all these matters pass, and
we three sing a song.

So shall we pleasantly both the time beguile now,
And eke despatch all our works, ere we can tell
how

TIB TALK I shrew them that say nay, and that
shall not be I.

M MUMBL And I am well content

TIB TALK Sing on then by and by

R ROISTER (*aside*) And I will not away, but
listen to their song,

Yet Merrygreek and my folks tarry very long.

Tib, An, and Margery do sing here ¹

Pipe, merry Annot, &c.

Trilla, Trilla, Trillary

Work, Tibet, work, Annot, work, Margery.

Sew, Tibet, knit, Annot; spin, Margery

Let us see who will win the victory

TIB TALK. This sleeve is not willing to be sewed,
I trow.

A small thing might make me all in the ground to
throw.

¹ [This song is quoted in "A Pore Helpe," probably printed many years before "Ralph Roister Doister." See Hazlitt's "Popular Poetry," II, 260. It therefore seems likely that in this, as in other cases, Udall introduced a song popular at the time, and the composition of some one else.]

Then they sing again.

Pipe, merry Annot, &c
Trilla, Trilla, Trillary
What, Tibet ' what, Annot ' what, Margey '
Ye sleep, but we do not, that shall we try,
Your fingers be numbed, our work will not lie

TIB TALK If ye do so again—well, I would
 advise you nay :
 In good sooth, one stop more, and I make holy-
 day !

They sing the third time

Pipe, merry Annot, &c
Trilla, Trilla, Trillary
Now, Tibbet, now, Annot, now, Margey,
Now whippet apace for the maistry
But it will not be, our mouth is so dry

TIB TALK Ah, each finger is a thumb to-day,
 me-think
 I care not to let all alone, choose it swim or sink

They sing the fourth time.

Pipe, merry Annot, &c
Trilla, Trilla, Trillary
When, Tibbet ? when, Annot ? when, Margey ?
I will not,—I can not,—no more can I
Then give we all over, and there let it lie !
 [Let her cast down her work

TIB TALK There it lieth ! the worst is but a
 curried coat
 Tut, I am used thereto I care not a groat

AN ALYFACE Have we done singing since
 then will I in again
 Here I found you, and here I leave both twain

[*Ere*
 M MUMBL And I will not be long after Tib
 Talkapace! [*She discovers R Roister Doister*

TIB TALK What is the matter?

M MUMBL Yond stood a man all this space,
 And hath heard all that ever we spake together

TIB TALK Marry, the more lout he for his
 coming hither,
 And the less good he can to listen maidens talk
 I care not, and I go bid him hence for to walk
 It were well done to know what he maketh here-
 away

R ROISTER Now might I speak to them, if I
 wist what to say [*Aside*

M MUMBL Nay, we will go both of's, and see
 what he is

R ROISTER (*coming forward*) One that heard
 all your talk and singing, i-wis

TIB TALK The more to blame you a good
 thrifty husband

Would elsewhere have had some better matters in
 hand

R ROISTER I did it for no harm, but for good
 love I bear

To you dame Mistress Custance I did you talk
 hear

And, mistress nurse, I will kiss you for acquaint-
 ance

M MUMBL I come anon, sir

TIB TALK Faith, I would our dame Custance
 Saw this gear

M MUMBL I must first wipe all clean, yea, I must

TIB TALK Ill 'chieve it, doting fool, but it must
 be cust

M MUMBL God 'ield you, sn, chad not so much, i-chotte not when
Ne'er since chwas born, chwine,¹ of such a gay gentleman

R ROISTER I will kiss you too, maiden, for the good will I bear ye

TIB TALK No, forsooth, by your leave, ye shall not kiss me

R ROISTER Yes, be not afeard, I do not disdain you a whit

TIB TALK Why should I fear you? I have not so little wit,

Ye are but a man, I know very well

R ROISTER Why, then?

TIB TALK Forsooth, for I will not I use not to kiss men

R ROISTER I would fain kiss you too, good maiden, if I might

TIB TALK What should that need?

R ROISTER But to honour you, by this light I use to kiss all them that I love, to God I vow

TIB TALK Yea, sn? I pray you, when did ye last kiss your cow?

R ROISTER Ye might be proud to kiss me, if ye were wise

TIB TALK What promotion were therein?

R ROISTER Nurse is not so nice

TIB TALK Well, I have not been taught to kissing and licking

R ROISTER Yet, I thank you, mistress nurse, ye made no sticking

M MUMBL I will not stick for a koss with such a man as you

¹ i e, "I had not so much, I wot not when never since I was born, I ween" She here speaks a rustic dialect—*Cooper*

- TIB TALK They that lust!—I will again to
my sewing now
- AN ALYFACE¹ Tidings, ho! tidings! dame
Custance greeteth you well
- R. ROISTER Whom? me?
- AN ALYFACE You, sir² No, sir I do no
such tale tell
- R. ROISTER But, and she knew me here!—
- AN ALFYACE Tibet Talkapace,
Your mistress Custance and mine must speak with
your grace
- TIB TALK With me?
- AN ALYFACE You must come in to her, out of
all doubts
- TIB TALK And my work not half-done? a
mischief on all louts! [*Ex amb*]
- R. ROISTER Ah, good sweet nurse!
- M. MUMBL Ah, good sweet gentleman!
- R. ROISTER Who?²
- M. MUMBL Nay, I cannot tell, sir, but what
thing would you?
- R. ROISTER How doth sweet Custance, my
heart of gold, tell me how?
- M. MUMBL She doth very well, sir, and com-
mand[s] me to you
- R. ROISTER To me?
- M. MUMBL Yea, to you, sir
- R. ROISTER To me? nurse, tell me plain,
To me?
- M. MUMBL Yea
- R. ROISTER That word maketh me alive
again
- M. MUMBL She command[ed] me to one last
day, whoe'er it was.

¹ Her re-entrance is not marked — *Cooper*.

² [Orig reads, *what*]

R ROISTER That was e'en to me and none other,
by the mass

M MUMBL I cannot tell you surely, but one it
was

R ROISTER It was I and none other—this
cometh to good pass

I promise thee, nurse, I favour her

M MUMBL E'en so, sn ?

R ROISTER Bid her sue to me for marriage

M MUMBL E'en so, sir ?

R ROISTER And surely for thy sake she shall
speed

M MUMBL. E'en so, sir ?

R ROISTER I shall be contented to take her

M MUMBL E'en so, sir ?

R ROISTER But at thy request and for thy sake

M MUMBL E'en so, sn ?

R ROISTER And, come, hark in thine ear what
to say

M MUMBL E'en so, sn ?

[Here let him tell her a great long tale in her ear]

ACTUS I, SCÆNA IV

MATTHEW MERRYGREEK, DOBINET DOUGHTY,
HARPAX, RALPH ROISTER, MARGERY
MUMBLECRUST

M. MERRY Come on, sirs, apace, and 'quit you-
selves like men

You pains shall be rewarded

D DOUGH But, I wot not when

M MERRY. Do your master worship, as ye have
done in time past

D DOUGH Speak to them of mine office he
shall have a cast

M MERRY Harpax, look that thou do well too
and thy fellow

HARPAX I warrant, if he will mine example
follow

M MERRY Count'sy, whoresons duck you and
crouch at every word

D DOUGH Yes, whether our master speak ear-
nest or boid¹

M MERRY For this lieth upon his preferment
indeed

D DOUGH Oft is he a wooer, but never doth he
speed

M MERRY But with whom is he now so sadly
rounding² yond?

D DOUGH With *Nobis nicebectur misere*³ fond

M. MERRY God be at your wedding be ye
sped already?

I did not suppose that your love was so greedy
I perceive now ye have chose of devotion,
And joy have ye, lady, of your promotion!

R ROISTER Tush, fool, thou art deceived, this
is not she

M MERRY Well, mock¹ much of her, and keep
her well, I 'vise ye

I will take no charge of such a fair piece keeping

M MUMBL What aileth this fellow? he driveth
me to weeping

¹ Joke — *Borde*, *bou d*, or *booi d*, as the word is spelled by
Spenser, means a jest or sport, from the French *Bourde*—

“Of old adventures that fell white,
And some of *bourdes* and ribaudy”

—*Lay le Freine* See *Toone's Glossary* —Cooper

² Seriously whispering—

“And in his ear him *rounded* close behind”

—*Faerie Queene*, Book III, Canto 10 —Cooper

³ [Apparently intentional nonsense for *nobis miscebetur
misere*]

⁴ [For *make*]

- M MERRY What, weep on the wedding-day?
be merry, woman
Though I say it, ye have chose a good gentleman
R ROISTER Kock's nowns,¹ what meanest thou,
man? tut, a whistle
M MERRY Ah, sir, be good to her, she is but
a giistle
Ah, sweet lamb and coney!
R ROISTER Tut, thou art deceived
M MERRY Weep no moie, lady, ye shall be
well received
Up with some mery noise,² sirs, to bung home
the bride!
R ROISTER Gog's arms, knave, art thou mad?
I tell thee thou art wide
M MERRY Then, ye intend by night to have
her home brought.
R ROISTER I tell thee, no
M MERRY How then?
R ROISTER 'Tis neither meant ne thought.
M MERRY What shall we then do with her?
R ROISTER Ah, foolish harebriam,
This is not she
M MERRY No, is [not] Why, then, unsaid
again!
And what young girl is this with your maship so
bold?
R ROISTER A gnl?
M MERRY. Yea, I daresay, scarce yet threescore
year old
R ROISTER This same is the fan widow's
nurse, of whom ye wot.
M MERRY Is she but a nurse of a house?
hence home, old trot!

¹ God's wounds

² *Music* So often used of old — *Cooper*.

Hence at once !

R ROISTER No, no

M MERRY. What, an' please your maship,

A nuiſe talk ſo homely with one of your worſhip ?

R ROISTER I will have it ſo , it is my pleaſure
and will

M MERRY Then I am content. Nuiſe, come
again, tarry ſtill

R ROISTER What, ſhe will help forward this
my ſuit, for her part

M MERRY Then is't mine own piſſany and
blessing on my heart !

R ROISTER This is our beſt friend, man

M MERRY Then teach her what to ſay

M MUMBL I am taught already

M MERRY Then go, make no delay

R ROISTER Yet hark, one word in thine ear

M MERRY Back, ſirs, from his tail !

R ROISTER Back, villains , will ye be privy of
my counſel ?

M MERRY Back, ſirs ! So I told you afore
ye would be ſhent

R ROISTER She ſhall have the fiſt day a whole
peck of argente

M MUMBL A peck ! *Nomine Patris*, have ye
ſo much ſpare ?

R ROISTER Yea, and a cart-load thereto, or elſe
were it bare ,

Besides other moveables, houſehold ſtuff and land

M MUMBL Have ye lands too ?

R ROISTER An hundred marks

M MERRY Yea, a thouſand

M MUMBL And have ye cattle too ? and ſheep
too ?

R ROISTER Yea, a few

M MERRY He is aſhamed the number of them
to ſhow

E'en round about him as many thousand sheep goes,
As he and thou, and I too, have fingers and toes

M MUMBL And how many years old be you ?

R ROISTER Forty at least

M MERRY Yea, and thrice forty to them

R. ROISTER Nay, thou dost jest

I am not so old thou misreckonest my years

M MERRY I know that, but my mind was on
bullocks and steers

M MUMBL And what shall I show her your
mastership's name is ?

R ROISTER Nay, she shall make suit, ere she
know that, i-wis

M MUMBL Yet let me somewhat know

M MERRY This is he, understand

That killed the blue spider in Blanchepowder land

M MUMBL Yea, Jesus, William, zee, law¹ did
he zo, law ?

M MERRY Yea, and the last elephant that ever
he saw,

As the beast passed by, he start out of a busk,¹

And e'en with pure strength of arms plucked out
his great tusk

M MUMBL Jesus, *Nomine Patris*, what a thing
was that !

R ROISTER Yea, but, Merrygreek, one thing
thou hast forgot

M MERRY What ?

R ROISTER Of th' other elephant

M MERRY O, him that fled away ?

R ROISTER Yea

M MERRY Yea, he knew that his match was
in place that day.

¹ A copse or bush See "Tempest," act iv, sc 1

"And every *bosky* bound from side to side" —Milton

Tut, he bet the King of Crickets on Christmas-day,
That he crept in a hole, and not a word to say

M MUMBL A sore man, by zembletee ¹

M MERRY Why, he wrong a club
Once in a fray out of the hand of Belzebub

R ROISTER And how when Mumfision—

M MERRY O, your costreling
Bore the lantern a-field so before the gozeling—
Nay, that is too long a matter now to be told
Never ask his name, nurse, I warrant thee, be hold
He conquered in one day from Rome to Naples,
And won towns, nurse, as fast as thou canst make
apples

M MUMBL O Lord ! my heart quaketh for
fear, he is so sore

R ROISTER Thou makest her too much afeard,
Merrygreek, no more
This tale would fear my sweetheart Custance
right evil

M MERRY Nay, let her take him, nurse, and
fear not the devil.
But thus is our song dasht—sirs, ye may home
again

R ROISTER No, shall they not ^[To the music] I charge you
all here to remain
The villain slaves !—a whole day, ere they can be
found !

M MERRY Couch on your marybones, whore-
sons, down to the ground !
Was it meet he should tarry so long in one place,
Without harmony of music or some solace ?
Whoso hath such bees as your master in his head
Had need to have his sprits with music be fed
By your mastership's licence—

R. ROISTER What is that ? a mote !

¹ [Appearance, *quasi* semblety, semblance]

M MERRY No, it was a fowl's feather had light
on your coat

R ROISTER I was nigh no feathers, since I came
from my bed

M MERRY No, sir, it was a hair that was fall
from your head

R ROISTER. My men come, when it please
them

M MERRY By your leave—

R ROISTER What is that ?

M MERRY Your gown was foul spotted with
the foot¹ of a gnat

R. ROISTER Then master to offend they are
nothing afeard

What now ?

M MERRY A lousy hair from your mastership's
beard

And sir, for nurse's sake, pardon this one offence

OMNES FAMULÆ We shall not after this show
the like negligence

R ROISTER I pardon you this once, and, come,
sing ne'er the worse

M MERRY How like you the goodness of this
gentleman, nurse ?

M MUMBL God save his mastership, that can
so his men forgive !

And I will hear them sing, ere I go, by his leave

R ROISTER Marry, and thou shalt, wench
come, we two will dance

M MUMBL Nay, I will by mine own self foot
the song perchance

R ROISTER Go it, sirs, lustily

[*Returns to write a letter*]

M MUMBL Pipe up a merry note

¹ [Should we not read *fute* ? See Halliwell in 2.]

Let me hear it played, I will foot it for a groat
[*Cantent* ¹

R ROISTER Now, nurse, take this same letter
here to thy mistress,

And as my trust is in thee, ply my business

M MUMBL It shall be done

M MERRY Who made it?

R ROISTER I wrote it each whit

M MERRY Then needs it no mending?

R ROISTER No, no

M MERRY No, I know your wit

R ROISTER I warrant it well

M MUMBL It shall be delivered,

But, if ye speed, shall I be considered?

M MERRY Whough! dost thou doubt of that?

M MUMBL What shall I have?

M MERRY An hundred times more than thou
canst devise to crave

M MUMBL Shall I have some new gear, for my
old is all spent?

M MERRY The worst kitchen wench shall go
in ladies' raiment

M MUMBL Yea?

M MERRY And the worst drudge in the house
shall go better

Than your mistress doth now

M MUMBL. Then I trudge with your letter.

R ROISTER Now may I repose me Custance
is mine own

Let ussing and play homeward, that it may be known

M MERRY But are you sure that your letter is
well enough?

R ROISTER I wrote it myself

M MERRY Then sing we to dinner

[*Here they sing, and go out singing*

¹ See the second song at the end of the play — *Cooper*

ACTUS I, SCÆNA 5

CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE, MARGERY MUMBLECRUST

C CUSTANCE Who *took thee this letter, Margery Mumblecrust?

M MUMBL A lusty gay bachelor took it me of trust,

And if ye seek to him, he will love your domg

C CUSTANCE Yea, but where learned he that manner of wooing?

M MUMBL If to sue to him you will any pains take,

He will have you to his wife (he saith) for my sake

C CUSTANCE Some wise gentleman belike I am bespoken

And I thought verily this had been some token

From my dear spouse,¹ Gawin Goodluck, whom when him please,

God luckily send home to both our hearts' ease!

M MUMBL A jolly man it is, I wot well by report,

And would have you to him for marriage resort

Best open the writing, and see what it doth speak

C CUSTANCE At this time, nurse, I will neither read ne break

M MUMBL He promised to give you a whole peck of gold,

C CUSTANCE Perchance, [t'will] lack of a pint, when it shall be all told

M MUMBL I would take a gay rich husband, and I were you

¹ The word *spouse* is here used for *betrothed lover*—
Cooper

C CUSTANCE In good sooth, Madge, e'en so
 would I, if I were thou¹
 But no more of this fond talk now, let us go in,
 And see thou no more move me folly to begin,
 Nor bring me no mo letters for no man's pleasure,
 But thou know from whom
 M MUMBL I warrant, ye shall be sure

ACTUS II, SCÆNA 1²

DOBINET DOUGHTY

D DOUGH Where is the house I go to, before
 or behind?
 I know not where nor when, nor how I shall it
 find
 If I had ten men's bodies and legs, and strength,
 This trotting that I have must needs lame me at
 length
 And now that my master is new-set on wooing,
 I trust there shall none of us find lack of doing
 Two pair of shoes a day will now be too little
 To seive me, I must trot to and fro so muckle
 "Go bear me this token," "carry me this letter,"
 Now this is the best way, now that way is better
 "Up before day, sirs, I charge you, an hour or
 twain,
 Tudge, do me this message, and bring word quick
 again."
 If one miss but a minute, then, "His arms and
 wounds,

¹ The idea is borrowed from Alexander's celebrated reply to Parmenio — *Cooper*

² A night has passed between the first and second acts — *Cooper*

I would not have slacked for ten thousand pounds¹

Nay see, I beseech you, if my most trusty page

Go not now about to hinder my marriage²

So fervent hot wooing, and so far from wiving,

I trow, never was any creature living,

With every woman is he in some love's-pang,

Then up to our lute at midnight, *twangledom twang*

Then twang with our sonnets, and twang with our dumps,¹

And heigho from our heart, as heavy as lead-lumps

Then to our recorder² with *toodleoodle poop*,

As the howlet out of an ivy bush should hoop

Anon to our gittern,³ *thrumpledum thrumpledum thrum,*

Thrumpledum, thrumpledum, thrumpledum, thrumpledum, thrum

Of songs and ballads also he is a maker,

And that can he as finely do as Jack Raker,⁴

Yea, and extempore will he ditties compose,

Foolish Marsias ne'er made the like, I suppose

Yet must we sing them, as good stuff, I undertake,

As for such a pen-man is well fitting to make

"Ah, for these long nights! heigho! when will it be day?"

I fear, ere I come, she will be wooed away"

Then, when answer is made, that it may not be,

"O death, why comest thou not?" by and by saith he

¹ A tune generally a mournful one

² A flageolet

³ A lute, or guitar

⁴ "What have ye of the Lord Dakers?

He maketh vs *Jacke Rakers*,

He says we are but crakers"

—Skelton's *Why come ye not to Court?*

See also the same author's "Speke Parrot"—Cooper

But then from his heart to put away sorrow,
 He is as far in with some new love next morrow
 But, in the mean season, we trudge and we trot
 From dayspring to midnight I sit not nor rest not
 And now am I sent to dame Christian Custance,
 But I fear it will end with a mock for pastance¹
 I bring her a ring with a token in a clout,
 And by all guess this same is her house out of
 doubt
 I know it now perfect, I am in my right way,
 And lo! yond the old nurse that was with us last
 day

ACTUS II, SCÆNA 2

MADGE MUMBLECRUST, DOBINER DOUGHTY.

M MUMBL I was ne'er so shoke¹ up afore, since
 I was born
 That our mistress could not have had chid, I would
 have sworn
 And I pray God I die, if I meant any harm,
 But for my lifetime this shall be to me a charm
 D DOUGH God you save and see, nurse! and
 how is it with you?
 M MUMBL Marry, a great deal the worse it is
 for such as thou
 D DOUGH For me? Why so?
 M MUMBL Why, were not thou one of them,
 say,

¹ *Passe temps*, pastime, sport So in act iv, sc vi —

“Do ye think, Dame Custance,
 That in this wooing I have meant ought but *pastance*?”

Again, act v, scene 2—

“Truly, most dear spouse, nought was done but for *pastance*”

—Cooper

² [Shaken]

That sang and played here with the gentleman
last day?

D DOUGH Yes, and he would know, if you
have for him spoken,

And prays you to deliver this ring and token

M MUMBL Now, by the token that God tokened,
• brother,

I will deliver no token, one nor other

I have once been so shent for your master's pleasure,

As I will not be again for all his treasure

D DOUGH He will thank you, woman.

M. MUMBL. I will none of his thank

[Exit M Mumb] ¹

D DOUGH I ween I am a prophet, this gear
will prove blank.

But what, should I home again without answer go?

It were better go to Rome on my head than so ²

I will tarry here this month, but some of the house

Shall take it of me, and then I care not a louse

But yonder cometh forth a wench or a lad

If he have not one Lombard's touch,³ my luck is
bad

ACTUS II, SCÆNA 3

TRUEPENNY, D. DOUGH, TIBET T, ANNOT AL

TRUEPENNY I am clean lost for lack of merry
company,

We 'gree not half well within, our wenches and I

¹ [In the original, D Doughty is made to go out]

² [Perhaps a sort of allusion to the proverb, To go to Rome with a mortar on one's head]

³ A Lombard's touchstone, to try gold and silver See
"Richard III.," act iv, sc 2 — *Cooper*.

They will command like mistresses, they will
forbid,

If they be not served, Truepenny must be chid

Let them be as merry now, as ye can desire

With turning of a hand our mirth lieth in the
mire

I cannot skill of such changeable mettle,

There is nothing with them but, In dock, out
nettle¹

D DOUGH Whether is it better that I speak to
him first,

O! he first to me? It is good to cast the worst

If I begin first, he will smell all my purpose

Otherwise I shall not need anything to disclose

[Aside
TRUEPENNY What boy have we yonder? I
will see what he is

D DOUGH He cometh to me It is hereabout,
I-wis

[Aside
TRUEPENNY Wouldest thou ought, friend, that
thou lookest so about?

D DOUGH Yea, but whether ye can help me
or no, I doubt

I seek to one Mistress Custance house here dwelling

TRUEPENNY. It is my mistress ye seek to, by
your telling

D DOUGH Is there any of that name here but
she?

TRUEPENNY Not one in all the whole town
that I know, pardè

D DOUGH A widow she is, I trow

TRUEPENNY And what, and she be?

D DOUGH But ensured to an husband?

TRUEPENNY Yea, so think we

¹ A proverbial expression, relating to a still common
practice — *Coopee*

D DOUGH And I dwell with her husband that
trusteth to be

TRUEPENNY In faith, then must thou needs be
welcome to me

Let us, for acquaintance, shake hands together,
And, whate'er thou be, heartily welcome hither

TIB TALK¹ Well, Truepenny, never but fling-
ing?

AN ALYFACE And frisking?

TRUEPENNY Well, Tibet and Annot, still
swinging and whisking?

TIB TALK But ye roil abroad

AN ALYFACE In the street everywhere

TRUEPENNY Where are ye twain² in chambers,
when ye meet me there?

But come hither, fools I have one now by the
hand,

Servant to him that must be our mistress' husband,
Bid him welcome

AN ALYFACE To me truly he is welcome

TIB TALK Forsooth and, as I may say, heartily
welcome

D DOUGH I thank you, mistress maids

AN ALYFACE I hope we shall better know

TIB TALK And when will our new master
come?

D DOUGH Shortly, I trow

TIB TALK I would it were to-morrow, for, till
he resort,

Our mistress, being a widow, hath small comfort
And I heard our nurse speak of an husband to-
day,

Ready for our mistress, a rich man and a gay
And we shall go in our French hoods every day
In our silk cassocks (I warrant you) fresh and gay

¹ Tib and Annot would seem to enter here — *Cooper*.

In our trick ferdegews and billiments of gold ;
 Brave in our suits of change, seven double fold.
 Then shall ye see Tibet, sirs, tread the moss so
 trim ;

Nay, why said I tread ? ye shall see her glide and
 swim ;

Not lumperdy-clumperdy, like our spaniel Rig.

TRUEPENNY. Marry, then, prick-me-dainty ; come,
 toast me a fig.

Who shall then know our Tib Talkapace, trow ye ?

AN. ALYFACE. And why not Annot Alyface as
 fine as she ?

TRUEPENNY. And what, had Tom Truepenny a
 father or none ?

AN. ALYFACE. Then our pretty new-come-man
 will look to be one.

TRUEPENNY. We four, I trust, shall be a jolly
 merry knot.

Shall we sing a fit¹ to welcome our friend, Annot ?

AN. ALYFACE. Perchance, he cannot sing.

D. DOUGH. I am at all assays.

TIB. TALK. By Cock, and the better welcome to
 us always.

Here they sing :

*A thing very fit
 For them that have wit,
 And are fellows knit,
 Servants in one house to be ;
 As fast for to sit,
 And not oft to flit,
 Nor vary a whit,
 But lovingly to agree.*

¹ A fit usually means the division of a ballad, but here it is to be understood as a song.—Cooper.

*No man complaining,
 No other disdainng,
 For loss or for gaining
 But fellows or friends to be,
 No grudge remainng,
 No work refraing,
 Nor help restrainng,
 But lovingly to agree*

*No man for despite,
 By word or by write,
 His fellow to twite,
 But further in honesty,
 No good turns entwite,
 Nor old sores recite,
 But let all go quite,
 And lovingly to agree*

*After drudgeriy,
 When they be weary,
 Then to be merry,
 To laugh and sing they be free,
 With chip and cheiry,
 Heigh derry derry,
 Trill on the bery,
 And lovingly to agree*

TIB TALK Will you now in with us unto our mistress go?

D DOUGH I have first for my master an errand or two

But I have here from him a token and a ring,
 They shall have most thank of her, that first doth
 it bring

TIB TALK Marry, that will I

TRUEPENNY See, and Tibet snatch not now !

TIB TALK And why may not I, sir, get thanks
as well as you ? [Exit

AN ALYFACE Yet get ye not all, we will go
with you both,

And have part of your thanks, be ye never so loth
[Exit omnes

D. DOUGH So my hands are rid of it, I care for
no more.

I may now return home so durst I not afore
[Exit

ACTUS II, SCENA 4

C CUSTANCE, TIBET, ANNOT ALYFACE,
TRUEPENNY

C. CUSTANCE Nay, come forth all three, and
come hither, pretty maid

Will not so many forewarnings make you afraid ?

TIB TALK Yes, forsooth

C CUSTANCE. But still be a runner up and
down ?

Still be a bringer of tidings and tokens to town ?

TIB TALK No, forsooth, mistress

C. CUSTANCE Is all your delight and joy

In whisking and ramping abroad, like a Tom-boy ?

TIB TALK. Forsooth, these were there too, Annot
and Truepenny

TRUEPENNY. Yea, but ye alone took it, ye can-
not deny.

AN. ALYFACE Yea, that ye did

TIB TALK. But, if I had not, ye twain would

C CUSTANCE You great calf, ye should have
more wit, so ye should [To Truap

But why should any of you take such things in
hand ?

TIB. TALK Because it came from him that must
be your husband

C CUSTANCE How do ye know that?

TIB TALK Forsooth, the boy did say so

C CUSTANCE What was his name?

AN ALYFACE We asked not

C CUSTANCE No, did [ye not?]

AN ALYFACE He is not far gone, of likelihood

TRUEPENNY I will see

C CUSTANCE If thou canst find him in the
street, bring him to me.

TRUEPENNY Yes [Exeat

C CUSTANCE Well, ye naughty girls, if ever I
perceive

That henceforth you do letters or tokens receive,
To bring unto me from any person or place,
Except ye first show me the party face to face,
Either thou, or thou, full truly ab¹ thou shalt

TIB TALK Pardon this, and the next time
powder me in salt

C CUSTANCE I shall make all girls by you
twain to beware

TIB TALK If I ever offend again, do not me spare
But if ever I see that false boy any more,
By your mistressship's licence, I tell you afore,
I will rather have my coat twenty times swinged,
Than on the naughty wag not to be avenged.

C CUSTANCE Good wenches would not so ramp
abroad idly,
But keep within doors, and ply their work ear-
nestly
If one would speak with me, that is a man likely,
Ye shall have ight good thank to bring me word
quickly,

¹ i. e., Abide the consequences, rue, or suffer for See "A
Midsummer Night's Dream," act iii, sc 2 — Cooper

But otherwise with messages to come in post,
 From henceforth I promise you shall be to your cost
 Get you into your work

TIB AND ANNOT Yes, forsooth

C CUSTANCE Hence, both twain
 And let me see you play me such a part again !

[*Ex. Tib and Annot*]

TRUEPENNY (*re-entering*) Mistress, I have run
 past the far end of the street,
 Yet can I not yonder crafty boy see nor meet

C CUSTANCE No !

TRUEPENNY Yet I looked as far beyond the people
 As one may see out of the top of Paul's steeple

C CUSTANCE Hence, in at doors, and let me no
 more be vext !

TRUEPENNY Forgive me this one fault, and lay
 on for the next ¹

C. CUSTANCE Now will I in too, for I think, so
 God me mend,

This will prove some foolish matter in the end

[*Exeat.*]

ACTUS III, SCÆNA 1

MATTHEW MERRYGREEK

M MERRY Now say this again he hath some-
 what to doing
 Which followeth the trace of one that is wooing ,
 Specially that hath no more wit in his head,
 Than my cousin Roister Doister withal is led
 I am sent in all haste to espy and to mark,
 How our letters and tokens are likely to wark

¹ Truepenny goes out here, but the old copy omits his
exit — *Cooper*

Master Roister Doister must have answer in haste,
For he loveth not to spend much labour in waste
Now as for Christian Custance, by this light,
Though she had not her troth to Gawin Goodluck
plight,
Yet rather than with such a loutish dolt to marry,
I daresay would live a poor life solitary
But fain would I speak with Custance, if I wist how,
To laugh at the matter Yond cometh one forth
now.

ACTUS III, SCÆNA 2

TIBET. M MERRYGREEK (*aside*)

TIB TALK Ah! that I might but once in my
life have a sight

Of him who made us all so ill-shent ! By this light,
He should never escape, if I had him by the ear,
But even from his head I would it bite or tear
Yea, and if one of them were not enou',
I would bite them both off, I make God avow

M MERRY What is he, whom this little mouse
doth so threaten? [*Aside*]

TIB TALK I would teach him, I trow, to make
girls shent or beaten

M MERRY I will call her Maid, with whom
are ye so hasty?

TIB TALK Not with you, sir, but with a little wage-pasty,

A deceiver of folks by subtle craft and guile

M MERRY I know where she is Dobinet hath
wrought some wile

TIB TALK He brought a ring and token,
which he said was sent

From our dame's husband, but I wot well I was
shent,

For it liked her as well (to tell you no lies)

As water in a¹ ship, or salt cast in her eyes

And yet, whence it came, neither we nor she can tell

M MERRY We shall have sport anon I like
this very well [Aside

And dwell ye here with mistress Custance, fair maid?

TIB TALK Yea, marry do I, sir what would
ye have said?

M MERRY A little message unto her, by word
of mouth

TIB TALK No messages, by your leave, nor
tokens forsooth

M MERRY Then help me to speak with her

TIB TALK With a good will that

Here she cometh forth. Now speak—ye know
best what

C. CUSTANCE None other life with you, maid,
but abroad to skip?

TIB TALK Forsooth, here is one would speak
with your mistressship.

C CUSTANCE Ah, have ye been learning of mo
messages now?

TIB TALK I would not hear his mind, but bad
him show it to you

C CUSTANCE In at doors!

TIB TALK I am gone [Exit

M MERRY. Dame Custance, God ye save!

C CUSTANCE Welcome, friend Meirygreek,
and what thing would ye have?

M MERRY I am come to you a little matter to
break

C CUSTANCE But see it be honest, else better
not to speak.

M. MERRY. How feel ye yourself affected here
of late?

¹ [Original, *her*]

C CUSTANCE I feel no manner change, but after
the old rate

But whereby do ye mean?

M MERRY Concerning marriage
Doth not love lade you?

C CUSTANCE I feel no such carriage

M MERRY Do ye feel no pangs of dotage?
Answer me right

C CUSTANCE I doat so, that I make but one
sleep all the night
But what need all these words?

M MERRY O Jesus! will ye see
What dissembling creatures these same women be?
[Aside

The gentleman ye wot of, whom ye do so love,
That ye would fain marry him, if he durst it move,
Among other rich widows which are of him glad,
Lest ye for lesing of him perchance might run
mad,

Is now contented that, upon your suit making,
Ye be as one in election of taking

C CUSTANCE What a tale is this! That I wot
of! Whom I love!

M. MERRY Yea, and he is as loving a worm
again as a dove

E'en of very pity he is willing you to take,
Because ye shall not destroy yourself for his sake

C CUSTANCE Marry, God 'ield¹ his mashp!
whatever he be,

It is gentmanly spoken

M MERRY Is it not, trow ye?
If ye have the grace now to offer yourself, ye
speed

C CUSTANCE As much as though I did, this
time it shall not need.

¹ [Shield]

But what gentleman is it, I pray you tell me plain,
That wooeth so finely ?

M MERRY Lo, where ye be again !
As though ye knew him not !

C CUSTANCE Tush ! ye speak in jest

M MERRY Nay, sure the party is in good
knacking earnest,
And have you he will (he saith) and have you he
must

C CUSTANCE I am promised during my life,
that is just

M MERRY Marry, so thinketh he—unto him
alone

C CUSTANCE No creature hath my faith and
troth but one,
That is Gawin Goodluck and if it be not he,
He hath no title this way, whatever he be,
For I know none to whom I have such words
spoken.

M MERRY Ye know him not, you, by his letter
and token ?

C CUSTANCE Indeed true it is, that a letter I
have,
But I never read it yet, as God me save

M MERRY Ye a woman ? and your letter so
long unread !

C CUSTANCE Ye may thereby know what haste
I have to wed
But now, who is it for my hand ? I know by
guess

M MERRY Ah ! well, I say—

C CUSTANCE It is Roister Doister, doubtless

M MERRY Will ye never leave this dissimula-
tion ?
Ye know him not ?

C CUSTANCE But by imagination,
For no man there is, but a very dolt and lout,

That to woo a widow would so go about
 He shall never have me his wife, while he do live
 M MERRY Then will he have you if he may
 so mot I thrive,
 And he biddeth you send him word by me,
 That ye humbly beseech him ye may his wife be,
 And that there shall be no let in you nor mistrust,
 But to be wedded on Sunday next, if he lust,
 And biddeth you to look for him
 C CUSTANCE Doth he bid so?
 M MERRY. When he cometh, ask him whether
 he did or no?
 C CUSTANCE Go say, that I bid him keep him
 warm at home,
 For, if he come abroad, he shall cough me a mome¹
 My mind was vexed, I 'shiew his head, sottish
 dolt
 M MERRY He hath in his head—
 C CUSTANCE As much brain as a burbolt²
 M MERRY Well, dame Custance, if he hear
 you thus play choploge³
 C CUSTANCE What will he?
 M MERRY. Play the devil in the horologe⁴
 C CUSTANCE. I defy him, lout
 M MERRY Shall I tell him what ye say?

¹ A fool or blockhead See act v, scenes 2 and 5
 "Cough me a fool" is common in old plays —Cooper

² A birdbolt, a short, thick arrow, with a blunt head,
 chiefly made use of to kill rooks It appears to have been
 looked upon as an emblem of dulness So in Marston's
 "What you Will," 1607—

"Ignorance should shoot
 His gross knobb d *bird-bolt*"

³ [Chop-logic]

⁴ "The divell is in th' *orloge*, the houres to trye
 Searche houres by the sun, the devylls dyall will he"
 —Heywood's *Proverbs*

C CUSTANCE Yea, and add whatsoever thou
 canst, I thee pray,
 And I will avouch it, whatsoever it be
 M MERRY Then let me alone, we will laugh
 well, ye shall see
 It will not be long, ere he will hither resort
 C CUSTANCE Let him come when him lust, I
 wish no better sport
 Fare ye well I will in, and read my great letter
 I shall to my wooer make answer the better
[*Ereat*

ACTUS III, SCÆNA 3

MATTHEW MERRYGREEK

M MERRY Now that the whole answer in my
 device doth rest,
 I shall paint out our wooer in colours of the best,
 And all that I say shall be on Custance's mouth,
 She is author of all that I shall speak, forsooth
 But yonder cometh Roister Doister now in a trance

[*Enter* R ROISTER]

R ROISTER Juno send me this day good luck
 and good chance !
 I cannot but come see how Merrygreek doth speed
 M. MERRY I will not see him, but give him a
 jut¹ indeed
 I cry your mastership mercy !
 R ROISTER And whither now ?
 M MERRY As fast as I could run, sir, in post
 against you
 But why speak ye so faintly, or why are ye so sad ?

¹ A jostle

R ROISTER Thou knowest the proverb—because I cannot be had

Hast thou spoken with this woman ?

M MERRY Yea, that I have

R ROISTER And what, will this gear be ?

M MERRY No, so God me save

R ROISTER Hast thou a flat answer ?

M MERRY Nay, a sharp answer

R ROISTER What ?

M MERRY Ye shall not (she saith), by her will, marry her cat

Ye are such a calf, such an ass, such a block,
Such a lilburn, such a hobil, such a lobcock,
And because ye should come to her at no season,
She despised your maship out of all reason
"Beware what ye say (ko I) of such a gentleman"
"Nay, I fear him not (ko she), do the best he can"

He vaunteth himself for a man of prowess great,
Whereas a good gander, I dare say, may him beat

And where he is louted¹ and laughed to scorn,
For the veriest dolt that ever was born
And veriest lubber, sloven and beast,
Living in this world from the west to the east,
Yet of himself hath he such opinion,
That in all the world is not the like minion
He thinketh each woman to be brought in dotage
With the only sight of his goodly personage
Yet none that will have him we do him lout
and flock,
And make him among us our common sporting-stock,
And so would I now (ko she), save only because—

¹ Mocked or devised for a lout See 'First Part of Henry VI,' act iv, scene 3 —*Cooper*

"Better nay (ko I) " "I lust not meddle with daws "

"Ye are happy (ko I) that ye are a woman
This would cost you your life, in case ye were a man "

R ROISTER Yea, an hundred thousand pound
should not save her life

M MERRY No, but that ye woo her to have
her to your wife,
But I could not stop her mouth

R ROISTER Heigho, alas !

M MERRY Be of good cheer, man, and let the
world pass ¹

R ROISTER What shall I do or say, now that it
will not be ?

M MERRY Ye shall have choice of a thousand
as good as she,
And ye must pardon her, it is for lack of wit

R ROISTER. Yea, for were not I an husband for
her fit ?

Well, what should I now do ?

M MERRY. I'faith, I cannot tell

R ROISTER I will go home, and die

M MERRY Then shall I bid toll the bell ?

R ROISTER No

M MERRY God have mercy on your soul ah
good gentleman,
That e'er you should thus die for an unkind woman !
Will ye drink once, ere ye go ?

R ROISTER No, no, I will none

M MERRY How feels your soul to God ?

R ROISTER I am nigh-gone

¹ A proverbial expression of heedless jollity. See the Induction to the "Taming of the Shrew," where *Sly* exclaims "*Paucas pallabris*, let the world slide, Sessa !" — *Cooper*.

M MERRY. And shall we hence straight ?

R ROISTER Yea.

M MERRY *Placebo dilexi.* [ut infra ¹

Master Roister Doister will straight go home, and die

R ROISTER Heigho, alas ! the pangs of death my heart do break

M MERRY. Hold your peace, for shame, sir ! a dead man may not speak

Ne quando. What mourners and what torches shall we have ?

R ROISTER None

M MERRY *Duige.* He will go darkling to his grave

Neque lux, neque crux, neque mourners, *neque* clink, He will steal to heaven, unknowing to God, I think.

A porta inferi Who shall your goods possess ?

R ROISTER. Thou shalt be my sector,² and have all, more or less

M MERRY *Requiem æternam* Now, God reward your mastership,

And I will cry halfpenny-dole for your worship,
Come forth, sirs, hear the doleful news I shall you tell

[*Evocat servos milites*

Our good master here will no longer with us dwell,
But in spite of Custance, which hath him wearied,
Let us see his maship solemnly buried,
And while some piece of his soul is yet him within,
Some part of his funerals let us here begin

Audiri vocem All men take heed by this one gentleman,

How you set your love upon an unkind woman
For these women be all such mad, peevish elves,
They will not be won, except to please themselves

¹ See the Psalmody at the end of the Comedy — *Cooper*

² Executor.

But, in faith, Custance, if ever ye come in hell,
 Master Roister Doister shall seive you as well—
 And will ye needs go from us thus in very deed?

R ROISTER Yea, in good sadness

M MERRY Now Jesus Christ be your speed
 Good night, Roger, old knave! farewell, Roger, old
 knave!

Good night, Roger, old knave, knave knap!

[*ut infra*¹

Pray for the late master Roister Doister's soul,
 And come forth, parish clerk, let the passing-bell
 toll

[*Ad servos milites*

Pray for your master, sirs, and for him ring a peal
 He was your right good master, while he was in
 heal

R. ROISTER *Qui Lazarum*

Heigho!

M MERRY. Dead men go not so fast in *Para-*
disum

R ROISTER Heigho!

M MERRY. Soft, hear what I have cast

R ROISTER I will hear nothing, I am past

M MERRY Whough, wellaway!

Ye may tarry one hour, and hear what I shall say
 Ye were best, sir, for awhile to revive again,
 And quite them, ere ye go

R ROISTER Trowest thou so?

M MERRY Yea, plain

R ROISTER How may I revive, being now so
 far past?

M MERRY I will rub your temples, and fet you
 again at last

R ROISTER It will not be possible

M MERRY Yes, for twenty pound

R ROISTER Arms! what dost thou?

¹ See the end of the Comedy — *Cooper*

M MERRY Fet you again out of your sound ¹
By this cross, ye were nigh gone indeed, I might
feel

Your soul departing within an inch of your heel
Now follow my counsel—

R ROISTER What is it ²

M MERRY If I were you,
Custance should eft seek to me, ere I would bow

R ROISTER. Well, as thou wilt have me, even
so will I do

M MERRY Then shall ye revive again for an
hour or two

R ROISTER As thou wilt I am content, for a
little space

M MERRY Good hap is not hasty yet in space
cometh grace

To speak with Custance yourself should be very
well,

What good thereof may come, nor I nor you can
tell

But now the matter standeth upon your marriage,
Ye must now take unto you a lusty carriage ²

Ye may not speak with a faint heart to Custance

But with a lusty breast ³ and countenance,

That she may know she hath to answer to a man

R ROISTER Yes, I can do that as well as any
can

M MERRY Then, because ye must Custance
face to face woo,

Let us see how to behave yourself ye can do

Ye must have a portly brag after your estate

R ROISTER Tush, I can handle that after the
best rate

M MERRY Well done, so, lo¹ up, man, with
your head and chin¹

¹ [Swoon]

² [Original, *courage*]

³ Voice

Up with that snout, man so lo ' now ye begun
So, that is somewhat like , but, pranky-coat, nay
when ?

That is a lusty brute ' hands unto your side, man
So, lo ' now is it even as it should be ,
That is somewhat like for a man of your degree
Then must ye stately go, jetting up and down ¹
Tut ' can ye no better shake the tail of your gown ?
There, lo ' such a lusty biag it is ye must make

R ROISTER To come behind, and make curts'y,²
thou must some pains take

M MERRY Else were I much to blame I
thank your mastership ,
The Lord one day all-to begrime you with worship
Back, Sir Sauce ' let gentlefolks have elbow-room
'Void, sirs, see ye not Master Roister Doister come ?
Make place, my masters—

R ROISTER Thou jostlest now too nigh.

M MERRY Back, all rude louts

R ROISTER Tush

M MERRY I cry your maship mercy
Hoiday ' if fair fine Mistiess Custance saw you now,
Ralph Roister Doister were hei own, I warrant you

R ROISTER Ne'er a *master* by your gudle ?

M MERRY Your good Mastership's
Mastership were her own mistiesship's mistres-
ship's

Ye were take up for hawks , ye were gone, ye were
gone

But now one other thing more yet I think upon

R ROISTER Show what it is.

M MERRY A wooer, be he never so poor,
Must play and sing before his best-beloved's door

¹ Walking with an air or swing

² Formerly applied to any kind of obeisance, either of
man or woman —*Cooper*.

How much more then you ?

R ROISTER Thou speakest well, out of doubt
And perchance that would make her the sooner
come out ¹

Go call my musicians, bid them hie apace

M. MERRY I will be here with them, ere ye can
say *they ace* [Exeat

R ROISTER This was well said of Merrygreek,
I 'low his wit,

Before my sweetheart's door we will have a fit,
That, if my love come forth, I may with her talk
I doubt not but this gear shall on my side walk
But lo ! how well Merrygreek is returned since

M. MERRY ² There hath grown no grass on my
heel, since I went hence

Lo ! here have I brought that shall make you
pastance

R ROISTER Come, sirs, let us sing, to win my
dear love Custance [Cantent ³

M MERRY Lo, where she cometh ! some coun-
tenance to her make ,

And ye shall hear me be plain with her for your
sake

ACTUS III, SCÆNA 4

CUSTANCE, MERRYGREEK, ROISTER DOISTER

C CUSTANCE What gauding and fooling is this
afore my door ?

M MERRY May not folks be honest, pray you.
though they be poor ?

¹ [Original gives this line to Merrygreek]

² The re-entry is not marked in the old copy —Cooper

³ See the fourth song at the end of the Comedy —Cooper

C. CUSTANCE As that thing may be true, so rich folks may be fools

R. ROISTER Her talk is as fine as she had learned in schools

M. MERRY Look partly toward her, and draw a little near [Aside]

C. CUSTANCE Get ye home, idle folks

M. MERRY Why may not we be here?

Nay, and ye will haze, haze,¹ otherwise, I tell you plain,

And ye will not haze, then give us our gear again

C. CUSTANCE Indeed, I have of yours much gay things, God save all

R. ROISTER Speak gently unto her, and let her take all [Aside]

M. MERRY. Ye are too tender-hearted Shall she make us daws?² [Aside]

Nay, dame, I will be plain with you in my friend's cause

R. ROISTER Let all this pass, sweetheart, and accept my service

C. CUSTANCE I will not be served with a fool in no wise.

When I choose an husband, I hope to take a man

M. MERRY And where will ye find one which can do that he can?

Now this man toward you being so kind,

Why not make him an answer somewhat to his mind?

C. CUSTANCE I sent him a full answer by you, did I not?

M. MERRY And I reported it

C. CUSTANCE Nay, I must speak it again.

R. ROISTER. No, no, he told it all

M. MERRY Was I not meetly plain?

¹ i e, If you will have us, have us — *Cooper*.

R ROISTER Yes

M MERRY. But I would not tell all , for, faith,
if I had,

With you, dame Custance, ere this hour it had
been bad ,

And not without cause for this goodly personage
Meant no less than to join with you in marriage

C CUSTANCE Let him waste no more labour nor
suit about me

M. MERRY Ye know not where your preferment
lieth, I see ,

He sendeth you such a token, ring and letter

C CUSTANCE Marry, here it is , ye never saw a
better

M MERRY. Let us see your letter

C CUSTANCE Hold ' read it if ye can

And see what letter it is to win a woman

M MERRY [*reads*]

*To mine own dear coney, bird, sweetheart, and pigmy,
Good Mistress Custance, present these by and by*

Of this superscription do ye blame the style ?

C. CUSTANCE With the rest, as good stuff as ye
read a great while

M MERRY [*reads*]

“ Sweet Mistress, where as I love you nothing at all,
Regarding your substance and riches chief of all ,
For your personage, beauty, demeanour and wit,
I commend me unto you never a whit.

Sorry to hear report of your good welfare,

For, (as I hear say) such your conditions are,

That ye be worthy favour of no living man ,

To be abhorred of every honest man

To be taken for a woman inclined to vice ,

Nothing at all to virtue giving her due price

Wherefore concerning marriage ye are thought

Such a fine paragon as ne'er honest man bought
 And now by these presents I do you advertise,
 That I am minded to marry you in no wise
 For your goods and substance, I could be content
 To take you as ye are If ye mind to be my wife,
 Ye shall be assured, for the time of my life,
 I will keep ye right well from good iament and faie,
 Ye shall not be kept but in sorrow and care
 Ye shall in no wise live at your own liberty,
 Do and say what ye lust, ye shall never please me,
 But when ye are merry, I will be all sad,
 When ye are sorry, I will be very glad
 When ye seek your heart's ease, I will be unkind,
 At no time in me shall ye much gentleness find,
 But all things contrary to your will and mind
 Shall be done otherwise I will not be behind
 To speak And as for all them that would do you
 wrong,
 I will so help and maintaine, ye shall not live long
 Nor any foolish dolt shall cumber you, but I,
 I, whoe'er say nay, will stick by you, till I die
 Thus, good Mistiess Custance, the Lord you save
 and keep
 From me, Roister Doister, whether I wake or sleep,
 Who favoureth you no less (ye may be bold)
 Than this letter purporteth, which ye have unfold "1

C CUSTANCE How, by this letter of love? is it
 not fine?

R ROISTER By the Arms of Calais, it is none
 of mine

M MERRY Fie! you are foul to blame, this is
 your own hand

¹ This is the passage quoted by T. Wilson in his "Rule of Reason, containyng the arte of Logique," printed by Grafton in 1551 — *Cooper*.

C CUSTANCE Might not a woman be proud of such an husband?

M MERRY Ah, that ye would in a letter show such despite!

R ROISTER O, I would I had him here, the which did it indite!

M MERRY Why, ye made it yourself, ye told me, by this light!

R ROISTER. Yea, I meant I wrote it mine own self yesternight

C CUSTANCE I-wis, sir, I would not have sent you such a mock.

R ROISTER. Ye may so take it, but I meant it not so, by Cock.

M MERRY Who can blame this woman to fume, and fret, and rage?

Tut, tut, yourself now have married your own marriage

Well yet, Mistress Custance, if ye can this remit, This gentleman otherwise may your love requite

C CUSTANCE No, God be with you both, and seek no more to me

R ROISTER Wough! she is gone for ever, I shall her no more see.

M MERRY What, weep? Fie for shame! And blubber? For manhood's sake!

Never let your foe so much pleasure of you take
Rather play the man's part, and do love refrain
If she despise you, e'en despise ye her again.

R ROISTER By Goss¹ and for thy sake, I defy her indeed!

M MERRY Yea, and perchance that way ye shall much sooner speed,
For one mad property these women have, in fay,²

¹ [Jesus]

² In faith from the French, *foy* — *Ccooper*

When ye will, they will not will not ye? then
will they

Ah, foolish woman! ah, most unlucky Custance!

Ah, unfortunate woman! ah, peevish Custance,

Art thou to thine harms so obstinately bent,
That thou canst not see where lieth thine high
preferment?

Canst thou not lub dis man, which could lub dee so
well?

Art thou so much thine own foe?

R. ROISTER Thou dost the truth tell

M. MERRY Well, I lament

R. ROISTER So do I

M. MERRY Wherefore?

R. ROISTER For this thing,
Because she is gone

M. MERRY I mourn for another thing

R. ROISTER What is it, Merrygreek, wherefore
thou dost grief take?

M. MERRY That I am not a woman myself, for
your sake

I would have you myself, and a straw for yond
Gill,

And mock much of you, though it were against
my will

I would not, I warrant you, fall in such a rage,
As so to refuse such a goodly personage

R. ROISTER. In faith, I heartily thank thee,
Merrygreek

M. MERRY And I were a woman ——

R. ROISTER Thou wouldest to me seek

M. MERRY For, though I say it, a goodly per-
son ye be

R. ROISTER. No, no

M. MERRY Yes, a goodly man, as e'er I did see

R. ROISTER No, I am a poor homely man, as
God made me.

M MERRY. By the faith that I owe to God, sir,
but ye be
Would I might, for your sake, spend a thousand
pound land

R ROISTER I daresay thou wouldst have me
, to thy husband.

M. MERRY Yea, and I were the fairest lady in
the shire,
And knew you as I know you, and see you now
here—

Well, I say no more—

R ROISTER Gramercies, with all my heart

M MERRY But, since that cannot be, will ye
play a wise part?

R ROISTER How should I?

M MERRY Refrain from Custance a while now,
And I warrant her soon right glad to seek to you
Ye shall see her anon come on her knees creeping,
And pray you to be good to her, salt tears weeping

R. ROISTER But what, and she come not?

M MERRY In faith, then, farewell she
Or else, if ye be wroth, ye may avenged be

R. ROISTER By Cock's precious potstick and
e'en so I shall,

I will utterly destroy her, and house and all
But I would be avenged in the mean space,
On that vile scribbler, that did my wooing disgrace,

M MERRY Scribbler, ko you? Indeed, he is
worthy no less

I will call him to you, and ye bid me, doubtless

R ROISTER Yes, for although he had as many
lives

As a thousand widows and a thousand wives,
As a thousand lions and a thousand rats,
A thousand wolves and a thousand cats,
A thousand bulls and a thousand calves,
And a thousand legions divided in halves,

He shall never 'scape death on my sword's point,
Though I should be torn therefore joint by joint

M MERRY Nay, if ye will kill him, I will not
fet him,

I will not in so much extremity set him

He may yet amend, sir, and be an honest man,
Therefore pardon him, good soul, as much as ye
can

R ROISTER Well, for thy sake, this once with
his life he shall pass,

But I will hew him all to pieces, by the mass—

M. MERRY Nay, faith, ye shall promise that he
shall no harm have,

Else I will not fet him

R ROISTER I shall, so God me save¹

But I may chide him a good¹

M MERRY Yea, that do hardily.

R ROISTER. Go then.

M MERRY. I return, and bring him to you by
and by.² [Ex

ACTUS III, SCÆNA V

ROISTER DOISTER, MATTHEW MERRYGREEK

R ROISTER What is a gentleman, but his word
and his promise?

I must now save this villain's life in any wise,
And yet at him already my hands do tickle,

¹ In earnest—heartily So in Marlow's "Rich Jew of Malta," 1633, act ii, sc 3 [sign E 2, *ver so*]—

"I have laugh'd *a good* to see the cripples
Goe limping home to Christendome on stilts"—*Cooper*

² This expression, though now generally used to denote some little lapse of time, formerly signified *immediately* It is so used still in the North of England.—*Cooper*

I shall unneth¹ hold them, they will be so fickle.
But lo, and Merrygreek have not brought him sens!²

M MERRY Nay, I would I had of my purse
paid forty pence

SCRIVENER So would I too, but it needed not
that stound³

M MERRY But the gentman had rather spent
five thousand pound,
For it disgraced him at least five times as much

[*Enter SCRIVENER at one side*]

SCRIVENER He disgraced himself, his loutish-
ness is such

R ROISTER How long they stand prating (*To
Merry*) Why com'st thou not away?

M MERRY (*to Scriv*) Come now to himself, and
hark what he will say.

SCRIVENER I am not afraid in his presence to
appear

R. ROISTER Art thou come, fellow?

SCRIVENER How think you? Am I not here?

R ROISTER What hindrance hast thou done
me, and what villany!

SCRIVENER It hath come of thyself, if thou hast
had any

R ROISTER All the stock thou comest of, later
or rather,⁴

From thy first father's grandfather's father's father,
Nor all that shall come of thee, to the world's end,

¹ With difficulty—scarcely. See "Second Part of Henry the Sixth," act II, sc. 4—*Cooper*

² [Since] The re entrance of Merrygreek is not marked in the old copy—*Cooper*

³ [Time]

⁴ Earlier *Rath*, for *early*, occurs in Chaucer and in Milton—*Cooper*.

Though to three score generations they descend,
 Can be able to make a just recompense
 For this trespass of thine and this one offence

SCRIVENER Wherein ?

R ROISTER Did not you make me a letter,
 brother ?

SCRIVENER Pay the like hire, I will make you
 such an other

R ROISTER Nay, see, and these whoreson Phari-
 sees and Scribes

Do not get their living by polling¹ and bribes

If it were not for shame —

M MERRY Nay, hold thy hands still ²

Why, did ye not promise that ye would not him
 spill ?³

SCRIVENER. Let him not spare me

R ROISTER Why, wilt thou strike me again ?

SCRIVENER. Ye shall have as good as ye bring
 of me, that is plain

M MERRY I cannot blame him, sir, though your
 blows would him grieve ,

For he knoweth present death to ensue of all ye give

R ROISTER Well, this man for once hath pur-
 chased thy pardon

SCRIVENER And what say ye to me ? or else I
 will be gone

R ROISTER I say, the letter thou madest me
 was not good

SCRIVENER Then did ye wrong copy it, of like-
 hood

¹ Plundering—

“ Which *polls* and pills the poor in piteous wise ”
 —*Cooper* —*Faerie Queene*, Book v, canto 2

² [In the old copy this half-line is wrongly given to the
 Scrivener]

³ Destroy See “ King Lear,” act III, scene 2 —*Cooper*

R ROISTER Yes, out of thy copy, word for word, I it wrote

SCRIVENER Then was it as you prayed to have it, I wot

But in reading and pointing there was made some fault

R ROISTER I wot not, but it made all my matter to halt

SCRIVENER How say you, is this mine original, or no?

R ROISTER The self same that I wrote out of, so mot I go

SCRIVENER Look you on your own fist, and I will look on this

And let this man be judge, whether I read amiss

*To mine own dear coney, bird, sweetheart, and pigsnay,
Good Mistress Custance, present these by and by*

How now? doth not this superscription agree?

R ROISTER Read that is within, and there ye shall the fault see

SCRIVENER

“Sweet Mistress, whereas I love you, nothing at all

Regarding your riches and substance, chief of all
For your personage, beauty, demeanour and wit,
I commend me unto you, never a whit
Sorry to hear report of your good welfare,
For (as I hear say) such your conditions are,
That ye be worthy favour, of no living man
To be abhorred, of every honest man
To be taken for a woman inclined to vice
Nothing at all, to virtue giving her due price
Wherefore, concerning marriage, ye are thought
Such a fine paragon as ne’er honest man bought
And now, by these presents, I do you advertise

That I am minded to marry you , in no wise
 For your goods and substance , I can be content
 To take you as ye are If ye will be my wife,
 Ye shall be assured for the time of my life
 I will keep ye right well from good raiment and
 fare

Ye shall not be kept but in sorrow and care
 Ye shall in no wise live , at your own liberty
 Do and say what ye lust , ye shall never please me,
 But when ye are merry , I will be all sad,
 When ye are sorry , I will be very glad,
 When ye seek your heart's ease , I will be unkind
 At no time , in me shall ye much gentleness find
 But all things contrary to your will and mind
 Shall be done otherwise I will not be behind
 To speak , and as for all they that would do you
 wrong

(I will so help and maintain ye) shall not live long,
 Nor any foolish dolt shall cumber you , but I—
 I, whoe'er say nay, will stick by you till I die
 Thus, good Mistress Custance, the Lord you save
 and keep !

From me, Roister Doister, whether I wake or sleep,
 Who favoureth you no less (ye may be hold)
 Than this letter purporteth, which ye have unfold "

Now, sir, what default can ye find in this letter ?

R ROISTER Of truth, in my mind, there cannot be a better

SCRIVENER Then was the fault in reading, and not in writing,

No, nor, I dare say, in the form of inditing
 But who read this letter, that it sounded so nought ?

M MERRY I read it indeed

SCRIVENER Ye read it not as ye ought

R ROISTER Why, thou wretched villain, was all this same fault in thee ?

M MERRY I knock your costard,¹ if ye offer to strike me

R ROISTER Strikest thou indeed, and I offer but in jest?

M MERRY Yea, and rap ye again, except ye can sit in rest

And I will no longer tarry here, me believe

R ROISTER What, wilt thou be angry, and I do thee forgive?

Fare thou well, scribbler, I cry thee mercy indeed

SCRIVENER Fare ye well, bibbler, and worthily may ye speed

R ROISTER If it were another than thou, it were a knave

M MERRY Ye are another yourself, sir, the Lord us both save,

Albeit in this matter I must your pardon crave

Alas! would ye wish in me the wit that ye have?

But, as for my fault, I can quickly amend.

I will show Custance it was I that did offend

R ROISTER By so doing her anger may be reformed.

M MERRY But if by no entreaty she will be turned,

Then set light by her, and be as testy as she,

And do your force upon her with extremity

R ROISTER Come on therefore, let us go home in sadness

M MERRY That if force shall need, all may be in readiness²

And as for this letter, hardly let all go,

We will know, whe'er she refuse you for that or no

[*Exeant amb*]

¹ Head

² [It seems a question, whether this line does not belong to Ralph Roister]

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA 1

SIM SURESBY

SIM SURE Is there any man but I, Sim
Suresby, alone,
That would have taken such an enterprise him
upon ,
In such an outrageous tempest as this was,
Such a dangerous gulf of the sea to pass ?
I think verily Neptune's mighty godship
Was angry with some that was in our ship,
And but for the honesty which in me he found,
I think for the other's sake we had been drown'd
But fie on that servant which, for his master's
wealth,¹
Will stick for to hazard both his life and his health
My master Gawin Goodluck after me a day,
Because of the weather, thought best his ship to
stay ,
And now that I have the rough surges so well passed,
God grant I may find all things safe here at last
Then will I think all my travail well spent
Now, the first point whereof my master hath me
sent,
Is to salute dame Christian Custance, his wife
Espoused, whom he tendreth no less than his life
I must see how it is with her, well or wrong,
And whether for him she doth not now think long
Then to other friends I have a message or tway ,
And then so to return and meet him on the way
Now will I go knock, that I may dispatch with
speed ,
But lo ! forth cometh herself happily indeed

¹ Welfare Udall uses the word in this sense in his letter to the Cornish men — *Cooper*

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA 2

CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE, SIM. SURESBY

- C CUSTANCE I come to see if any more stirring
be here
But what stranger is this, which doth to me ap-
pear ?
- SIM SURESBY. I will speak to her Dame, the
Lord you save and see !
- C CUSTANCE What, friend Sim Suresby For-
sooth, right welcome ye be
How doth mine own Gawin Goodluck, I pray thee
tell ?
- SIM SURE When he knoweth of your health,
he will be perfect well.
- C CUSTANCE If he have perfect health, I am
as I would be
- SIM SURE Such news will please him well
This is as it should be
- C CUSTANCE I think now long for him
- SIM SURE And he as long for you
- C CUSTANCE When will he be at home ?
- SIM SURE His heart is here e'en now
His body cometh after
- C CUSTANCE I would see that fain
- SIM SURE As fast as wind and sail can carry it
a-main
- But what two men are yond coming hitherwards ?
- C CUSTANCE Now I shrew then best Christ-
mas cheeks both togetherward

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA 3

CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE, SIM SURESBY, RALPH
ROISTER, MATTHEW MERRYGREEK, TRUEPENNY

C CUSTANCE What mean these lewd fellows
thus to trouble me still ?

SIM SURESBY here, perchance, shall thereof deem
some ill,

And shall suspect in me some point of naughtiness,
And they come hitherward [Aside

SIM SURE What is their business ?

C CUSTANCE I have nought to them, nor they
to me, in sadness ¹

SIM. SURE Let us hearken them, somewhat
there is, I fear it

R ROISTER I will speak out aloud best, that
she may hear it

M MERRY Nay, alas ! ye may so fear her out
of her wit.

R ROISTER By the cross of my sword, I will
hurt her no whit

M MERRY Will ye do no harm indeed ? Shall
I trust your word ?

R ROISTER By Roister Doister's faith, I will
speak but in bord ²

SIM SURE Let us hearken them somewhat
there is, I fear it

R ROISTER I will speak out aloud, I care not
who hear it —

Sirs, see that my harness, my target and my shield
Be made as bright now, as when I was last in field
As white, as I should to war again to-morrow,

¹ In seriousness

² In jest

For sick shall I be, but I work some folk sorrow
Therefore see that all shine as bright as Saint
George,

Or as doth a key, newly come from the smith's
forge.

I would have my sword and harness to shine so
bright,

That I might therewith dim mine enemies' sight
I would have it cast beams as fast, I tell you plain,
As doth the glitt'ring grass after a shower of rain
And see that, in case I should need to come to
arming,

All things may be ready at a minute's warning
For such chance may chance in an hour do ye
hear?

M MERRY. As perchance shall not chance again
in seven year

R ROISTER Now, draw ye near to her, and
hear what shall be said

M MERRY. But I would not have you make
her too much afraid

R. ROISTER Well found, sweet wife, (I trust)
for all this your sour look

C CUSTANCE. Wife! Why call ye me wife?

SIM SURE (*aside*) Wife! This gear goeth a-
crook

M MERRY Nay, Mistress Custance, I warrant
you our letter

Is not as we read e'en now, but much better,
And where ye half stomached¹ this gentleman afore
For this same letter, ye will love him now therefore,
Nor it is not this letter, though ye were a queen,
That should break marriage between you twain, I
ween

¹ Disliked or resented See "Antony and Cleopatra," act
III, scene 4 — *Cooper*

C CUSTANCE I did not refuse him for the letter's sake

R ROISTER Then ye are content me for your husband to take

C CUSTANCE You for my husband to take !
Nothing less truly ?

R ROISTER Yea, say so, sweet spouse, afore strangers hardly

M MERRY And though I have here his letter of love with me,
Yet his rings and tokens he sent keep safe with ye

C CUSTANCE A mischief take his tokens, and him, and thee too !

But what prate I with fools ? Have I nought else to do ?

Come in with me, Sim Suresby, to take some repast

SIM SURE I must, ere I drink, by your leave, go in all haste

To a place or two with earnest letters of his

C CUSTANCE Then come drink here with me

SIM SURE I thank you

C CUSTANCE Do not miss
You shall have a token to your master with you

SIM SURE No tokens this time, gramecies
God be with you

C CUSTANCE Surely, this fellow misdeemeth some ill in me,

Which thing, but God help, will go near to spill me

R ROISTER Yea, farewell, fellow, and tell thy master Goodluck,

That he cometh too late of this blossom to pluck
Let him keep him there still, or at least-wise make no haste,

As for his labour hither he shall spend in waste
His betters be in place now

M MERRY As long as it will hold

C CUSTANCE (*aside*) I will be even with thee,
thou beast, thou may'st be bold

R ROISTER Will ye have us then ?

C CUSTANCE I will never have thee

R ROISTER Then will I have you

C CUSTANCE No, the devil shall have thee
I have gotten this hour more shame and harm by
thee,

Than all thy life-days thou canst do me honesty

M MERRY Why, now may ye see what it com'th
to in the end,

To make a deadly foe of your most loving friend

And i-wis this letter, if ye would hear it now—

C CUSTANCE I will hear none of it

M MERRY In faith, [t]would ravish you

C CUSTANCE He hath stained my name for
ever, this is clear

R ROISTER I can make all as well in an hour

M MERRY As ten year

How say ye, will ye have him ?

C CUSTANCE No

M MERRY Will ye take him—

C CUSTANCE I defy him

M MERRY At my word ?

C CUSTANCE A shame take him !

Waste no more wind, for it will never be.

M MERRY This one fault with twain shall be
mended, ye shall see

Gentle Mistress Custance now, good Mistress
Custance,

Honey Mistress Custance now, sweet Mistress
Custance,

Golden Mistress Custance now, white Mistress
Custance,

Silken Mistress Custance now, fair Mistress Cu-
tance

C CUSTANCE Faith, rather than to marry with
 such a doltish lout,
 I would match myself with a beggar, out of doubt
 M MERRY Then I can say no more, to speed
 we are not like,
 Except ye rap out a rag of your rhetoric
 C CUSTANCE Speak not of winning me, for it
 shall never be so
 R ROISTER Yes, dame, I will have you, whether
 ye will or no
 I command you to love me ! wherefore should ye
 not ?
 Is not my love to you chafing and burning hot ?
 M MERRY To hei ! that is well said
 R ROISTER Shall I so break my brian,¹
 To doat upon you, and ye not love us again ?
 M MERRY Well said yet
 C CUSTANCE Go to, thou goose
 R ROISTER I say, Kit Custance,
 In case ye will not haze, well, better yes, per-
 chance
 C CUSTANCE Avaunt, losel !² pick thee hence !
 M MERRY Well, sir, ye perceive,
 For all your kind offer, she will not you receive
 R ROISTER Then a straw for her, and a straw
 for her again
 She shall not be my wife, would she never so fain,
 No, and though she would be at ten thousand
 pound cost
 M MERRY Lo, dame, ye may see what an hus-
 band ye have lost

¹ So in "The Maid's Metamorphosis," 1600 "In vain, I fear, I beat my brains about" These expressions have the same signification as the "*Cudgel thy brains no more about it,*" of the *First gravedigger* in "Hamlet"—Cooper

² A pitiful, worthless fellow. See "Winter's Tale," act II, sc 3—Cooper.

C CUSTANCE Yea, no force,¹ a jewel much better lost than found.

M MERRY Ah, ye will not believe how this doth my heart wound

How should a marriage between you be toward,
If both parties draw back, and become so froward?

R ROISTER Nay, dame, I will fire thee out of thy house, [though I die,²]

And destroy thee and all thine, and that by and by

M MERRY Nay, for the passion of God, sir, do not so

R ROISTER Yes, except she will say yea to that she said no

C CUSTANCE And what, be there no officers, trow we, in town,

To check idle loiterers, bragging up and down?

Where be they by whom vagabonds should be repest,

That poor silly widows might live in peace and rest?

Shall I never rid thee out of my company?

I will call for help What, ho! come forth, Truepenny!

TRUEPENNY³ Anon What is your will, Mistress? Did ye call me?

C CUSTANCE Yea go, run apace, and, as fast as may be,

Pray Tristram Trusty, my most assured friend,

To be here by and by, that he may me defend

TRUEPENNY. That message so quickly shall be done, by God's grace,

That at my return ye shall say, I went apace

[*Exeat*]

¹ No matter

² These words, not in the old copy, are necessary for the rhyme — *Cooper*

³ His entrance is not marked in the original — *Cooper*

C CUSTANCE Then shall we see, I trow, whether
ye shall do me harm

R ROISTER Yes, in faith, Kit, I shall thee and
thine so charm,

That all women incarnate by thee may beware

C CUSTANCE Nay, as for charming me, come
hither if thou dare

I shall clout thee, till thou stink, both thee and thy
train,

And coil¹ thee mine own hands, and send thee
home again

R ROISTER Yea, say'st thou me that, dame?
Dost thou me threaten?

Go we, I will see whether I shall be beaten

M MERRY Nay, for the paishe² of God, let me
now treat peace,

For bloodshed will there be, in case this strife in-
crease

Ah, good dame Custance, take better way with you!

C CUSTANCE Let him do his worst!

M. MERRY Yield in time

R ROISTER Come hence, thou!

[Exeant Roister and Merry]

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA 4

CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE, ANNOT ALYFACE, TIBET
TALKAPACE, M MUMBLECRUST

C CUSTANCE So, sirrah! If I should not with
him take this way,

¹ Cuff In Tim Bobbin's "Glossary of the Lancashire Dialect," a *coil* is explained by "a lump raised on the head by a blow" See also Brockett's "Glossary of North Country Words"—*Cooper*

² [Passion]

I should not be rid of him, I think, till doom's day
I will call forth my folks, that without any mocks,
If he come again, we may give him raps and knocks.
Madge Mumblecrust, come forth, and Tibet Talk-
apace,

Yea, and come forth too, Mistress Annot Alyface

AN ALYFACE. I come.

TIB TALK. And I am here

M MUMBL. And I am here too, at length

C CUSTANCE Like warriors, if need be, ye
must show your strength

The man that this day hath thus beguiled you
Is Ralph Roister Doister, whom ye know well enou',
The most lout and dastard that ever on ground trod

TIB TALK I see all folk mock him, when he
goeth abroad

C CUSTANCE What, pretty maid, will ye talk
when I speak?

TIB TALK No, forsooth, good mistress

C CUSTANCE Will ye my tale break?

He threateneth to come hither with all his force to
fight,

I charge you, if he come, on him with all your
might:

M MUMBL I with my distaff will reach him one
rap

TIB TALK And I with my new broom will
sweep him one swap,

And then with our great club I will reach him one rap
And I with our skimmer will fling him one flap

TIB TALK. Then Truepenny's fire-fork will him
shrewdly fray

And you with the spit may drive him quite away

C CUSTANCE Go, make all ready, that it may
be e'en so

TIB TALK. For my part, I shrew them that last
about it go

[*Exeant*

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA 5

CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE, TRUEPENNY, TRISTRAM
TRUSTY

C CUSTANCE Truepenny did promise mē to
run a great pace,
My friend Tristram Trusty to fet into this place
Indeed he dwelleth hence a good start, I confess,
But yet a quick messenger might twice since, as I
guess,
Have gone and come again Ah ' yond I spy him
now

TRUEPENNY (*To T Trusty*) Ye are a slow goer,
sir, I make God a vow,
My Mistress Custance will in me put all the blame,
Your legs be longer than mine come apace, for
shame

C CUSTANCE I can¹ thee thank, Truepenny,
thou hast done right well

TRUEPENNY Mistiess, since I went, no grass
hath grown on my heel
But Master Tristram Trusty here maketh no speed

C CUSTANCE That he came at all, I thank him
in very deed,

For now have I need of the help of some wise man

T TRUSTY Then may I be gone again, for none
such I am

TRUEPENNY Ye may be by your going, for no
Alderman

Can go, I dare say, a sadder² pace than ye can

C CUSTANCE Truepenny, get thee in, thou
shalt among them know,
How to use thyself like a proper man, I trow

¹ *I can.* See *ante*

² Slower, graver

TRUEPENNY I go [Exit

C CUSTANCE Now, Tristram Trusty, I thank
you right much

For at my first sending to come ye never grutch

T TRUSTY Dame Custance, God ye save, and
• while my life shall last,

For my friend Goodluck's sake ye shall not send
in waste

C CUSTANCE He shall give you thanks

T TRUSTY I will do much for his sake

C CUSTANCE But alack ! I fear great dis-
pleasure shall he take

T TRUSTY Wherefore ?

C CUSTANCE For a foolish matter

T TRUSTY What is your cause ?

C CUSTANCE I am ill accumbred with a couple
of daws

T TRUSTY Nay, weep not, woman, but tell me
what your cause is

A, concerning my friend is anything amiss ?

C CUSTANCE No, not on my part, but here
was Sim Suresby—

T TRUSTY He was with me, and told me so

C CUSTANCE And he stood by,

While Ralph Roister Doister, with help of Merry-
greek,

For promise of marriage did unto me seek

T TRUSTY And had ye made any promise
before them twain ?

C CUSTANCE No, I had rather be torn in
pieces and slain

No man hath my faith and troth but Gawin
Goodluck,

And that before Suresby did I say, and there stuck,
But of certain letters there were such words
spoken—

T TRUSTY He told me that too

C CUSTANCE And of a ring and token ,
That Suresby, I spied, did more than half suspect,
That I my faith to Gawin Goodluck did reject

T TRUSTY But was there no such matter, Dame
Custance, indeed ?

C CUSTANCE If ever my head thought it, God
send me ill speed !

Wherefore, I beseech you, with me to be a witness,
That in all my life I never intended thing less
And what a brainsick fool Ralph Roister Doister
is,

Yourself knows well enough

T TRUSTY Ye say full true, i-wis

C CUSTANCE Because to be his wife I ne grant .
nor apply,

Hither will he come, he sweareth, by and by,
To kill both me and mine, and beat down my
house flat ,

Therefore I pray your aid

T TRUSTY I warrant you that

C CUSTANCE Have I so many years lived a
sober life,

And showed myself honest maid, widow, and
wife,

And now to be abused in such a vile sort ?

To see how poor widow live, all void of comfort !

T TRUSTY I warrant him do you no harm
nor wrong at all

C CUSTANCE No, but Matthew Merrygreek
doth me most appal ,

That he would join himself with such a wretched
lout

T TRUSTY He doth it for a jest, I know him
out of doubt

And here cometh Merrygreek ?

C. CUSTANCE Then shall we hear his mind

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA 6

MERRYGREEK, CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE,
TRIST TRUSTY

M MERRY Custance and Trusty both, I do you
here well find

C CUSTANCE Ah! Matthew Merrygreek, ye
have used me well!

M MERRY Now, for altogether,¹ ye must your
answer tell

Will ye have this man, woman, or else will ye
not?

Else will he come, never boar so brim,² nor toast
so hot

C CUSTANCE But why join ye with him?

T TRUSTY For mirth?

C CUSTANCE Or else in sadness?

M MERRY The more fond of you both hardly
the matter guess

T TRUSTY Lo, how say ye, dame?

M MERRY Why, do ye think, dame Custance,
That in this wooing I have meant ought but
pastance?

C CUSTANCE Much things ye spake, I wot, to
maintain his dotage

M MERRY But well might ye judge, I spake it
all in mockage,

For why is Roister Doister a fit husband for you?

T TRUSTY I dare say ye never thought it

M MERRY No, to God I vow

¹ Now, once for all

² *i e*, So fierce A sow at certain seasons is said to go to
brim—

—Cooper "They foughten *breme* as it were bolles two"
Chaucer, *Knight's Tale*, line 1701

And did not I know afore of the insurance
Between Gawin Goodluck and Christian Custance ?
And did not I for the nonce, by my conveyance
Read his letter in a wrong sense for dalliance ?
That if you could have take it up at the first bound,
We should thereat such a sport and pastime have
found,

That all the whole town should have been the
merrier

C CUSTANCE Ill ache you heads both ! I was
never wearier,

Nor never more vexed since the first day I was born

T TRUSTY But very well I wist, he here did
all in scorn

C CUSTANCE But I feared thereof to take dis-
honesty

M MERRY. This should both have made sport,
and showed your honesty,

And Goodluck, I dare swear, your wit therein
would 'low¹

T TRUSTY Yea, being no worse than we know
it to be now

M MERRY And nothing yet too late for, when
I come to him,

Hither will he repair with a sheep's look full grim,
By plain force and violence to drive you to yield

C CUSTANCE If ye two bid me, we will with
him pitch a field,

I and my maids together

M MERRY Let us see, be bold !

C CUSTANCE Ye shall see women's war

T TRUSTY That fight will I behold

M. MERRY If occasion serve, taking his part
full brim,

I will strike at you, but the rap shall light on him

¹ Allow

When we first appear—

C CUSTANCE Then will I run away,
As though I were afeard

T TRUSTY Do you that part well play,
And I will sue for peace

M MERRY And I will set him on,
Then will he look as fierce as a Cotsold lion¹

T TRUSTY But when goest thou for him?

M MERRY That do I very now

C CUSTANCE Ye shall find us here

M MERRY Well, God have meicy on you

T TRUSTY There is no cause of fear, the least
boy in the street—

C CUSTANCE Nay, the least gyl I have, will
make him take his feet

But, hark! me-think they make preparation.

T TRUSTY No force, it will be a good recreation

C CUSTANCE I will stand withyn, and step forth
speedily,

And so make as though I ran away dreadfully

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA 7

R ROISTER, M MERRYGREEK, C CUSTANCE, D
DOUGHTY, HARPAX, TRISTRAM TRUSTY

R ROISTER Now, sirs, keep your 'ray, and see
your hearts be stout

But where be these cartiffs? Me-think they dare
not rout²

¹ A sheep Cotswold (pronounced Cotsold) is an old word for a sheepcote Hence the name of the hills in Gloucestershire —*Cooper*

² To assemble It is used by Bacon in his "History of Henry the Seventh," p. 68, fol 1629 —*Cooper*

How sayest thou, Merrygreek? What doth Kit
Custance say?

M MERRY I am loth to tell you

R ROISTER Tush, speak, man Yea or nay?

M MERRY Forsooth, sir, I have spoken for you
all that I can,

But if ye win her, ye must e'en play the man

E'en to fight it out ye must a man's heart take

R ROISTER Yes, they shall know, as¹ thou
knowest, I have a stomach

M MERRY A stomach (quod you), yea, as good
as e'er man had

R ROISTER I trow, they shall find and feel that
I am a lad

M MERRY By this cross, I have seen you eat
your meat as well

As any that e'er I have seen of, or heard tell

A stomach, quod you? He that will that deny,

I know was never at dinner in your company

R ROISTER Nay, the stomach of a man it is
that I mean

M MERRY Nay, the stomach of an hoise or a
dog, I ween

R ROISTER Nay, a man's stomach with a weapon,
mean I

M MERRY Ten men can scarce match you with
a spoon in a pie

R ROISTER Nay, the stomach of a man to try
in strife

M MERRY I never saw your stomach cloyed
yet in my life

R ROISTER Tush, I mean in strife or fighting
to try

M MERRY We shall see how ye will strike now,
being angry

¹ [Old copy, *and*]

R ROISTER Have at thy pate then, and save thy head, if thou may

M MERRY Nay, then, have at your pate again, by this day

R ROISTER Nay, thou mayest not stike at me again in no wise

M MERRY I cannot in fight make to you such warrantise

But as for your foes here let them the bargain¹ by

R ROISTER Nay, as for [that,] they shall every mother's child die

And in this my fume a litle thing might make me To beat down house and all, and else the devil take me

M MERRY If I were as ye be, by Gog's dear mother,

I would not leave one stone upon another

Though she would redeem it with twenty thousand pounds

R ROISTER It shall be even so, by his liv wounds !

M. MERRY Be not at one with her² upon any amends

R ROISTER No, though she make to me never so many friends

Not if all the world for her would undertake

No, not God himself neither shall not her peace make

On therefore, march forward ! Soft, stay a while yet

M MERRY On !

R ROISTER Tarry

M MERRY Forth !

R ROISTER Back

¹ [Abide by the bargain]

² *z e*, Be not reconciled to her —Cooper

M MERRY On !

R ROISTER Soft Now forward set

Enter C CUSTANCE

C CUSTANCE What business have we here ?

Out, alas, alas !

R ROISTER Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha !

Didst thou see that, Merrygreek, how afraid she was ?

Didst thou see how she fled apace out of my sight ?

Ah, good sweet Custance ! I pity her, by this light

M MERRY That tender heart of yours will mar
altogether,

Thus will ye be turned with wagging of a feather

R ROISTER On, sirs, keep your 'ray

M MERRY On forth, while this gear is hot

R ROISTER Soft, the Arms of Calais, I have
one thing forgot

M MERRY What lack we now ?

R ROISTER Retire, or else we be all slain

M MERRY Back, for the pash of God ! back,
sirs, back again !

What is the great matter ?

R ROISTER This hasty forth-going

Had almost brought us all to utter undoing .

It made me forget a thing most necessary

M MERRY Well remembered of a captain, by
Saint Mary

R ROISTER. It is a thing must be had.

M MERRY Let us have it then

R ROISTER But I wot not where or how

M MERRY Then wot not I when

But what is it ?

R ROISTER Of a chief thing I am to seek

M MERRY Tut, so will ye be, when ye have
studied a week

But tell me what it is ?

[*Aside*

- R ROISTER I lack yet an headpiece
M MERRY The kitchen collocavit the best hens
to grease,
Run, fet it, Dobinet, and come at once withal,
And bring with thee my potgun,¹ hanging by the
wall²
I have seen your head with it, full many a time,
Covered as safe as it had been with a scrine
And I warrant it save your head from any stroke,
Except perchance to be amazed with the smoke
I warrant your head therewith, except for the mist,
As safe as if it were fast locked up in a chist
And lo, here our Dobinet cometh with it now
D DOUGH It will cover me to the shoulderis
well enou'
M MERRY Let me see it on
R ROISTER In faith, it doth meetly well
M MERRY There can be no fitter thing Now
ye must us tell
What to do
R ROISTER Now forth in 'ray, sirs, and stop
no more
M MERRY Now, Saint George to borrow!³
Drum, dub-a-dub afore
T TRUSTY What mean you to do, sir? Com-
mit manslaughter?
R ROISTER To kill forty such is a matter of
laughter
T TRUSTY And who is it, sir, whom ye intend
thus to spill?

¹ A small gun, perhaps a corruption of *popgun* —Cooper

² The exit and re entry of Dobinet are not marked in the old copy —Cooper

³ To protect or guard In "Richard II," act 1, sc 3, the expression is—

"Mine innocency and Saint George to thrive!"—Cooper

R ROISTER Foolish Custance here forceth me
against my will

T TRUSTY And is there no mean your extreme
wrath to slake?

She shall some amends unto you good maship
make

R ROISTER I will none amends

T TRUSTY Is her offence so sore?

M MERRY And he were a lout, she could have
done no more

She hath call'd him fool, and 'dressed him like a
fool,

Mocked him like a fool, used him like a fool

T TRUSTY Well, yet the Sheriff, the Justice or
Constable,

Her misdemeanour to punish might be able

R ROISTER No, sir, I mine own self will, in
this present cause,

Be Sheriff and Justice, and whole Judge of the
laws

This matter to amend all officers be I shall

Constable, Bailiff, Sergeant—

M. MERRY And hangman, and all [*Aside*

T TRUSTY Yet a noble courage and the heart
of a man

Should more honour win by bearing with a woman

Therefore take the law, and let her answer thereto

R ROISTER Merrygreek, the best way were
even so to do

What honour should it be with a woman to fight?

M. MERRY And what, then, will ye thus forego
and lese your right?

R ROISTER Nay, I will take the law on her
withouten grace

T TRUSTY Or, if your maship could pardon this
one trespass—

I pray you, forgive her

R ROISTER Hoh !

M MERRY Tush, tush, sn, do not

T TRUSTY Be good master to her

R ROISTER Hoh !

M MERRY Tush, I say, do not

And what ! shall your people here return straight
• home ?

R. ROISTER Yea, levy the camp, sirs, and hence
again each one

But be still in readiness, if I hap to call ,¹

I cannot tell what sudden chance may befall

M MERRY. Do not off your hainess, sirs, I you
advise,

At the least for this fortnight, in no manner wise
Perchance in an hour, when all ye think least,
Our master's appetite to fight will be best

But soft, ere ye go, have once at Custance house

R ROISTER Soft, what wilt thou do ?

M MERRY Once discharge my arquebus ,
And for my heart's ease, have once more with my
potgun

R ROISTER Hold thy hands ! else is all our
purpose clean fordone

M MERRY And it cost me my life !

R ROISTER. I say, thou shalt not

M MERRY By the matt,² but I will have once
more with hail-shot

I will have some pennyworth , I will not lese all

¹ T Trusty is the prefix to this and the following line in the old copy, but it must be an error — *Cooper*

² [Put for *mass*, as *Gog* for *God*, &c]

ACTUS IV, SCÆNA 8

M MERRYGREEK, C CUSTANCE, R ROYSTER,
TIB T, AN ALYFACE, M MUMBLECRUST,
TRUEPENNY, DOBINET DOUGHTY, HARPA

Two drums with their Ensigns

C CUSTANCE What catiffs are those, that so
shake my house-wall?

M MERRY Ah, sirrah now Custance, if ye had
so much wit,

I would see you ask pardon, and yourselves submit

C CUSTANCE Have I still this ado with a
couple of fools?

M MERRY Hear ye what she saith?

C CUSTANCE Maidens, come forth with your
tools,

In a ray

M MERRY Dubba-dub, sirrah!

R ROISTER In a ray!

They come suddenly on us

M MERRY Dub-a-dub-dub!

R ROISTER In a ray!

That eve I was born! we are taken tardy

M MERRY Now, sirs, quit yourselves like tall
men and hardy

C CUSTANCE On afore, Truepenny! Hold
thine own, Annot!

On toward them, Tibet, for scape us they cannot!

Come forth, Madge Mumblecrust! so, stand fast
together

M MERRY God send us a fair day!

R ROYSTER See, they march on hither

TIB TALK But, mistress—

C CUSTANCE What say'st thou?

TIB TALK Shall I go fet our goose?

C CUSTANCE What to do?

TIB TALK To yonder Captain I will turn her loose

And she gape and hiss at him, as she doth at me,
I durst jeopard my hand she will make him flee ¹

C CUSTANCE On forward!

R ROISTER They come

M MERRY Stand!

R ROISTER Hold!

M MERRY Keep!

R ROISTER There!

M MERRY Strike!

R ROISTER Take heed!

C CUSTANCE Well said, Truepenny!

TRUEPENNY Ah, whoresons!

C CUSTANCE Well done, indeed!

M MERRY Hold thine own, Harpax! Down
with them, Dobinet!

C CUSTANCE Now, Madge, there, Annot, now
stick them, Tibet!

TIB TALK All my chief quarrel is to this same
little knave,

That beguiled me last day, nothing shall him save

D DOUGH Down with this little quean, that
hath at me such spite!

Save you from her, master, it is a very sprite

C CUSTANCE I myself will mounsire grand
captain undertake

¹ [An idea perhaps borrowed from the interlude of "Thersites," where we have the ludicrous incident of the snail Udall has drawn Ralph Roister Doister somewhat on the model of "Thersites," except that in Roister Doister the man's good nature and singleness of character win our regard, whereas the other is a contemptible braggart without any redeeming trait.]

- R ROISTER They win ground !
 M MERRY Save yourself, sir, for God's sake
 R ROISTER Out, alas ! I am slain, help !
 M MERRY Save yourself !
 R ROISTER Alas !
 M MERRY Nay, then, have at you, mistress
 R ROISTER Thou hittest me, alas !
 M MERRY I will strike at Custance here
 R ROISTER Thou hittest me !
 M MERRY (*aside*) So I will
 Nay, mistress Custance
 R ROISTER Alas ! thou hittest me still
 Hold !
 M MERRY Save yourself, sir !
 R ROISTER Help ! out alas ! I am slain
 M MERRY. Truce, hold your hands ! truce, for
 a pissing while or twain ¹
 Now, how say you, Custance, for saving of you life,
 Will ye yield, and grant to be this gentleman's wife ?
 C CUSTANCE Ye told me he loved me, call ye
 this love ?
 M MERRY. He loved a while, even like a turtle-
 dove
 C CUSTANCE Gay love, God save it ! so soon
 hot, so soon cold
 M MERRY I am sorry for you he could love
 you yet, so he could
 R ROISTER Nay, by Cock's precious, she shall
 be none of mine
 M MERRY Why so ?
 R ROISTER Come away, by the matt, she is
 mankind ²

¹ See "Two Gentlemen of Verona," act iv, scene 4.—*Cooper*

² *Mankind* is used by Shakespeare and other writers of his time as an adjective, in the sense of masculine.—*Cooper*

I dunst adventure the loss of my right hand
If she did not slee hei other husband

And see, if she prepare not again to fight !

M MERRY What, then, Saint George to borrow, our Lady's knight ?

R. ROISTER Slee else whom she will, by Gog, she shall not slee me

M. MERRY How then ?

R ROISTER. Rather than to be slain, I will flee

C. CUSTANCE To it again, my knightesses ! down with them all !

R ROISTER. Away, away, away ! she will else kill us all.

M MERRY Nay, stick to it, like an hardy man and a tall

R ROISTER O bones, thou hittest me ! Away, or else die we shall

M MERRY Away, for the pash of our sweet Lord Jesus Christ !

C CUSTANCE Away, lout and lubber, or I shall be thy priest ! *[Exeant Om.¹*

So this field is ours, we have driven them all away.

TIB TALK Thanks to God, mistress, ye have had a fair day.

C CUSTANCE Well, now go ye in, and make yourself some good cheer.

OMNES PARITER. We go

T TRUSTY Ah, sir ! what a field we have had here

C CUSTANCE Friend Tristram, I pray you be a witness with me

T TRUSTY Dame Custance, I shall depose for your honesty

¹ So in the old copy, but Ralph, Mat, Dob, and Harpax, only go out, lower down, the *exeat* of course applies to T Trusty — *Cooper*.

And now fare ye well, except something else ye
would

C CUSTANCE Not now, but when I need to
send, I will be bold [Exeat
I thank you for these pains And now I will get
me in

Now Roister Doister will no more wooing begin
[Ed

ACTUS V, SCÆNA 1

GAWIN GOODLUCK, SIM SURESBY

G GOOD Sim Suresby, my trusty man, now advise thee well,
And see that no false surmises thou me tell
Was there such ado about Custance, of a truth?

SIM SURE To report that I heard and saw to
me is ruth,
But both my duty, and name, and pioperty,¹
Warneth me to you to show fidelity
It may be well enough, and I wish it so to be,
She may herself discharge, and try her honesty.
Yet their claim to her, me-thought, was very large,
For with letters, rings, and tokens they did her
charge

Which when I heard and saw, I would none to
you bring

G GOOD No, by Saint Mary, I allow thee ² in
that thing

Ah sirrah! now I see truth in the proverb old
All things that shineth is not by and by pure gold

¹ [Peculiar place or function]

² *i. e.*, I approve of your conduct See "Second Part of Henry IV," act iv, sc 2, "King Lear," act ii, sc 4, and Romans, c xiv, v. 22—*Cooper*

If any do live a woman of honesty,
I would have sworn Christian Custance had been
she

SIM SURE Sir, though I to you be a servant
true and just,

Yet do not ye therefore your faithful spouse mis-
trust,

But examine the matter, and if ye shall it find
To be all well, be not ye for my words unkind

G GOOD I shall do that is right, and as I see
cause why

But here cometh Custance forth, we shall know
by and by.

ACTUS V, SCÆNA 2

C CUSTANCE, GAWIN GOODLUCK, SIM SURESBY

C CUSTANCE I come forth to see and hearken
for news good,

For about this hour is the time, of likelihood,
That Gawin Goodluck, by the sayings of Suresby,
Would be at home, and lo ! yond I see him, I
What, Gawin Goodluck ! the only hope of my life,
Welcome home, and kiss me your true espoused
wife

G GOOD Nay, soft, dame Custance, I must
first, by your licence,

See whether all things be clear in your conscience
I hear of your doings to me very strange

C CUSTANCE What ! feai ye that my faith to-
wards you should change ?

G GOOD I must needs mistrust ye be elsewhere
entangled,

For I hear that certain men with you have wrangled

About the promise of marriage by you to them
made

C CUSTANCE Could any man's report therein
your mind persuade !

G GOOD Well, you must therein declare your-
self to stand clear,

Else I and you, dame Custance, may not join this
year

C CUSTANCE Then would I were dead, and
fair laid in my grave

Ah ! Suresby, is this the honesty that ye have,
To hurt me with your report, not knowing the
thing ?

SIM SURE If ye be honest, my words can hurt
you nothing,

But what I heard and saw, I might not but report,

C CUSTANCE Ah, Lord, help poor widows,
destitute of comfort !

Truly, most dear spouse, nought was done but for
pastance

G GOOD But such kind of sporting is homely
dalliance

C CUSTANCE If ye knew the truth, ye would
take all in good part

G GOOD By your leave, I am not half well-
skilled in that art

C CUSTANCE It was none but Roister Doister,
that foolish mome

G GOOD Yea, Custance, better (they say) a bad
excuse than none

C CUSTANCE Why, Tristram Trusty, sir, you
true and faithful friend,

Was privy both to the beginning and the end

Let him be the judge, and for me testify

G GOOD I will the more credit that he shall
verify,

And because I will the truth know, e'en as it is,

I will to him myself, and know all without miss
Come on, Sim Suresby, that befoie my friend thou
may
Avouch thee the same words, which thou did'st to
me say [Exeant

ACTUS V., SCÆNA 3

CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE

C CUSTANCE O Lord ! how necessary it is now
of days,
That each body live uprightly all manner ways,
For let never so little a gap be open,
And be sure of this, the worst shall be spoken
How innocent stand I in this for deed or thought,
And yet see what mistrust towards me it hath
wrought
But thou, Lord, knowest all folks' thoughts, and
eke intents,
And thou art the deliverer of all innocents
Thou didst help the advoutress,¹ that she might be
amended,
Much more then help, Lord, that never ill intended
Thou didst help Susanna, wrongfully accused,
And no less dost thou see, Lord, how I am now
abused
Thou didst help Hester, when she should have
died,
Help also, good Lord, that my truth may be tried
Yet, if Gawin Goodluck with Tristram Trusty
speak,

¹ Adulteress, from the old French *adoultrer*. In Cartwright's "Ordinary," act iv, sc 5, the *Constable* says, "I'll look there shall be no *advoutry* in my ward"—*Cooper*

I trust of ill-report the force shall be but weak ,
And lo ' yond they come, sadly talking together .
I will abide, and not shrink for then coming hither

ACTUS V, SCÆNA 4

GAWIN GOODLUCK, TRISTRAM TRUSTY,
C. CUSTANCE, SIM SURESBY

G GOOD And was it none other than ye to me
report ?

T TRUSTY No , and here were ye wished, to
have seen the sport

G GOOD Would I had, rather than half of that
in my purse

SIM SURE. And I do much rejoyce the matter
was no worse.

And like as to open it I was to you faithful,
So of Dame Custance honest truth I am joyful.
For God forfend that I should hurt her by false
report

G GOOD Well, I will no longer hold her in dis-
comfort

C CUSTANCE Now come they hitheirward I
trust all shall be well

G GOOD Sweet Custance, neither heart can
think, nor tongue tell,

How much I joy in your constant fidelity
Come now, kiss me, the pearl of perfect honesty

C CUSTANCE God let me no longer to continue
in life,

Than I shall towards you continue a true wife.

G GOOD Well, now to make you for this some
part of amends,

I shall desire first you, and then such of our friends
As shall to you seem best, to sup at home with me,

Where at your fought field we shall laugh and merry be

SIM SURE And, mistress, I beseech you take with me no grief ¹

I did a true man's part, not wishing your reproof

C CUSTANCE Though hasty reports, through surmises growing,

May of poor innocents be utter overthrowing,

Yet because to thy master thou hast a true heart,

And I know mine own truth, I forgive thee for my part

G GOOD Go we all to my house, and of this gear no more

Go, prepare all things, Sim Suresby, hence, run afore

SIM SURE I go [Exit]

G GOOD Good But who cometh yond? Master Merrygreek?

C CUSTANCE Roister Doister's champion, I shrew his best cheek

T TRUSTY Roister Doister's self, your wooer, is with him too

Surely some thing there is with us they have to do

ACTUS V., SCÆNA 5.

M MERRYGREEK, RALPH ROISTER [to them], GAWIN GOODLUCK, TRISTRAM TRUSTY, C CUSTANCE

M MERRY Yonder I see Gawin Goodluck, to whom lieth my message

I will first salute him after his long voyage,

And then make all things well concerning your behalf

¹ i e., Bear me no ill-will

- R ROISTER Yea, for the pash of God
 M MERRY Hence ' out of sight, ye calf,
 Till I have spoke with them, and then I will you
 fet
 R ROISTER In God's name ¹
 M MERRY What, master Gawin Goodluck,
 well-met,
 And from your long voyage I bid you ight wel-
 come home
 G GOOD I thank you
 M MERRY I come to you from an honest mome.
 G GOOD Who is that?
 M MERRY Roister Doister, that doughty kite
 C CUSTANCE Fie ' I can scarce abide ye should
 his name recite
 M MERRY Ye must take him to favour, and
 pardon all past,
 He heareth of your return, and is full ill aghast
 G. GOOD I am right well content he have with
 us some cheer
 C CUSTANCE Fie upon him, beast ' then will
 not I be there
 G GOOD Why, Custance, do ye hate him more
 than ye love me?
 C CUSTANCE But for your mind, sir, where he
 were, would I not be
 T TRUSTY He would make us all laugh
 M MERRY Ye ne'er had better sport
 G GOOD I pray you, sweet Custance, let him
 to us resort
 C CUSTANCE To your will I assent.
 M MERRY Why, such a fool it is,
 As no man for good pastime would forego or miss
 G GOOD Fet him to go with us
 M MERRY He will be a glad man [Ex

¹ With these words R Roister evidently retires —Cooper

T TRUSTY We must, to make us mirth, maintain him¹ all we can
And lo, yond' he cometh, and Merrygreek with him

C CUSTANCE At his first entrance, ye shall see
I will him tum
But first let us hearken the gentleman's wise talk

T TRUSTY I pray you, mark, if ever ye saw
crane so stalk

ACTUS V, SCÆNA 6

R ROISTER, M MERRYGREEK, C CUSTANCE, G
GOODLUCK, T TRUSTY, D DOUGHTY, HARPAX

R ROISTER May I then be bold ?

M MERRY I warrant you on my word
They say they shall be sick, but ye be at their board

R ROISTER They were not angry, then ?

M MERRY Yes, at first, and made strange,
But when I said your anger to favour should
change,
And therewith had commended you accordingly,
They were all in love with your maship by and by,
And cried you meicy, that they had done you
wrong.

R ROISTER For why no man, woman, nor child
can hate me long

M. MERRY We fear (quod they) he will be
avenged one day,

¹ Encourage him So in the epistle to Gabriel Harvey, prefixed to Spenser's "Shepherd's Calendar" "The Right Worshipfull Maister Philip Sidney is a speciall favourer and maintainer of all kinde of learning"—Cooper

Then for a penny give all our lives we may

R ROISTER Said they so indeed ?

M MERRY Did they ? yea, even with one voice

He will forgive all (quod I) O, how they did rejoice !

R ROISTER Ha, ha, ha !

M MERRY Go fet him (say they), while he is in good mood ,

For have his anger who lust, we will not, by the rood !

R ROISTER I pray God that it be all true, that thou hast me told,

And that she fight no more

M MERRY I warrant you , be bold

To them, and salute them

R ROISTER. Sirs, I greet you all well

OMNES Your mastership is welcome

C CUSTANCE Saving my quarrel,

For sure I will put you up into the Exchequer

M. MERRY Why so ? Better nay Wherefore ?

C CUSTANCE For an usurer

R ROISTER I am no usurer, good mistress, by His arms

M MERRY When took he gain of money, to any man's harms ?

C CUSTANCE Yes, a foul usurer he is, ye shall see else

R ROISTER Did'st not thou promise she would pick no mo quarrels ? [To Merr.

C CUSTANCE He will lend no blows, but he have in recompense

Fifteen for one, which is too much of conscience

R ROISTER Ah dame ! by the ancient law of arms, a man

Hath no honour to foil his hands on a woman

C CUSTANCE And where other usurers take their gains yearly,

- This man is angry, but he have his by and by
G GOOD Sir, do not for her sake bear me your
displeasure
M MERRY Well, he shall with you talk thereof
more at leisure
Upon your good usage he will now shake your hand
R ROISTER And much heartily welcome from a
strange land.
M MERRY Be not afraid, Gawin, to let him
shake your fist
G GOOD O, the most honest gentleman that
e'er I wist
I do beseech your maship to take pain to sup with us
M MERRY He shall not say you nay, (and I
too by Jesus,)
Because ye shall be friends, and let all quarrels pass
R ROISTER I will be as good friends with them
as e'er I was
M MERRY Then, let me fetch your quire, that we
may have a song
R ROISTER Go
G GOOD I have heard no melody all this year
long
M MERRY¹ Come on, sirs, quickly
R ROISTER Sing on, sirs, for my friend's sake
D DOUGH Call ye these your friends?
R ROISTER Sing on, and no more words make
[*Here they sing*
G GOOD The Lord preserve our most noble
Queen of renown,²

¹ The exit and re-entry are not marked — *Cooper*

² [It seems probable that this prayer at the end was intended for Queen Elizabeth, not for her predecessor. The original prayer, if there was one, on the first presentation of the comedy, may have been suppressed in favour of one to suit the new circumstances.]

And her virtues reward with the heavenly crown
 C CUSTANCE The Lord strengthen her most
 excellent Majesty,
 Long to reign over us in all prosperity
 T TRUSTY That her godly proceedings, the
 faith to defend,
 He may stablish and maintain through to the end
 M MERRY God grant her, as she doth, the Gos-
 pel to protect,
 Learning and virtue to advance, and vice to correct
 R ROISTER God grant her loving subjects both
 the mind and grace
 Her most godly proceedings worthily to embrace
 HARPAX Her highness most worthy coun-
 cillors God prosper,
 With honour and love all men to minister
 OMNES God grant the nobility her to serve and
 love,
 With all the common'ty, as doth them behove '
 AMEN ¹

Certain Songs ² to be sung by those which shall
 use this Comedy or Interlude

The Second Song

*Who so to marry a minion wife,³
 Hath had good chance and hap,*

¹ Ancient interludes frequently ended with a prayer, which it was the custom of the players to deliver kneeling.—*Cooper*

² These are the songs referred to in the body of the Comedy

³ A *pet* or *dawling* wife.—*Cooper*

*Must love her and cherish her all his life,
And dandle her in his lap,*

*If she will fare e well, if she will go gay,
A good husband ever still,
Whatever she lust to do or to say,
Must let her have her own will,*

*About what affairs soever he go,
He must show her all his mand,
None of his counsels she may be kept fî o,
Else is he a man unkind*

The Fourth Song

*I mun be married a Sunday,
I mun be married a Sunday,
Whosoever shall come that way,
I mun be married a Sunday*

*Roister Doister is my name,
Roister Doister is my name,
A lusty brute I am the same;
I mun be married a Sunday.*

*Christian Custance have I found,
Christian Custance have I found,
A widow worth a thousand pound.
I mun be married a Sunday.*

*Custance is as sweet as honey,
Custance is as sweet as honey,
I her lamb, and she my coney,
I mun be married a Sunday*

*When we shall make our wedding feast,
 When we shall make our wedding feast,
 There shall be cheer for man and beast,
 I mun be married a Sunday
 I mun be married a Sunday, &c*

The Psalmody

Placebo dilexi

*Master Roister Doister will straight go home and die,
 Our Lord Jesus Christ his soul have mercy upon
 Thus you see, to-day a man, to-morrow John¹
 Yet, saving for a woman's extreme cruelty,
 He might have lived yet a month, or two, or three,
 But in spite of Custance, which hath him wearied,
 His mashup shall be worshipfully buried
 And while some piece of his soul is yet him within,
 Some part of his funeral let us here begin
 Dirge He will go darkling² to his grave,
 Neque lux, neque crux, nisi solum clink,
 Never gentleman so went toward heaven, I think
 Yet, sirs, as ye will the bliss of heaven win,
 When he cometh to the grave, lay him softly in,
 And all men take heed by this one gentleman,
 How you set your love upon an unkind woman,
 For these women be all such mad peevish elves,
 They will not be won, except it please themselves
 But, in faith, Custance, if ever ye come in hell,
 Master Roister Doister shall serve you as well.*

*Good night, Roger, old knave, farewell, Roger, old
 knave,
 Good night, Roger, old knave, knave, knap
 Ne quando Audiui vocem Requiem æternam*

¹ [Query, *Su John*, &c., the priest, to say the requiem
 See Hazlitt's "Proverbs," p 414]

² ["So out went the candle, and we were left darkling,"
 "King Lear," i 4, Dyce's 2d edit vii 269]

*The Peal of bells rung by the parish Clerk and
Roister Doister's four men*

The first Bell, a Triple. When died he ? When
died he ?

The second We have him ! We have him !

The third Roister Doister ! Roister Doister !

The fourth Bell He cometh ! He cometh !

The great Bell. Our own ! Our own !

FINIS

GAMMER GURTON'S NEEDLE

*A Ryght Pithy, Pleasaunt, and merie Comedie Intytuled
Gammer gurtons Needle Played on Stage not longe ago
in Christes Colledge in Cumbridge Made by M^r S M^r
of Art Imprynted at London, in Fleetestreat beneth the
Conduitt at the signe of S John Euangelist, by Thomas
Colwell 1575 4^o Black letter*

There was a second edition, 4to, 1661, which is of no value

[I found this introduction to "Gammer Gurton's Needle" among some collections made by my father about twenty years ago for a similar purpose, and as it was much fuller than that previously printed, it has been substituted I have, however, introduced a few additions from the Memoirs of Still in the "Athenæ Cantabrigienses," II, 467, and the "Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archæology," III, 130, the latter kindly communicated to me by Mr Joseph Bryant, of Cheshunt.—W. C. H.]

PREFACE.

JOHN STILL, the reputed author of this play, was the only son of William Still, Esq of Grantham, in Lincolnshire, and was born in or about 1543. In 1559 he matriculated as a pensioner in Christ's College, Cambridge, proceeded B A in 1561-2, and was elected M A in 1565. In 1570 he was presented to the rectory of St Martin Outwich, London, and in the same year proceeded B D. On the 30th July 1571, Archbishop Parker collated Still to the rectory of Hadleigh, in Suffolk, and in 1572 the primate, to whom he was chaplain, appointed him, with Dr Watts, Joint-Dean of Bocking. Other church preferments followed in quick succession, but this is perhaps scarcely a place for entering at large into biographical particulars, more especially as the authorship of the drama is a little uncertain. We must content ourselves with noting his gradual rise from the deanery of Bocking to the canonry at Westminster, the mastership of St John's College, Cambridge, the vice-chancellorship of the university on two occasions, the mastership of Trinity College, Cam

bridge, and finally, the bishopric of Bath and Wells, to which last dignity he was named 16 January 1592-3. He died at the episcopal palace at Wells, February 26, 1607-8, and was buried on the 4th April following, in the cathedral, where a handsome monument was erected to his memory. He was twice married, and left behind him several children. His excellent character is attested by Sir John Harrington, who says that he was a man "to whom I never came but I grew more religious, and from whom I never went but I parted more instructed." The comedy of "Gammer Guxton's Needle," the only dramatic product of his pen of which we have any knowledge, was "played on stage, in Christ's College, Cambridge," in the year 1566, and the following entry from the bursars' books of that college, on the occasion, manifests that the authorities applied themselves to its production with spirit. "Item, for the Carpenters setting upp the Scaffold at the plaine xxd¹." At this time, Mr Stall was twenty-three years old, but an entry in the registers of the Stationers' Company, under the year 1563, is considered by Mr Collier to have very possible reference to the present comedy, and, in this case, the young clergyman would have begun, and ended, his authorship ere he was nineteen. "Received of Thomas Colwell for his lycense for pryntinge of a play intituled Dyceon of Bedlam, mjd." There is no such play, Mr Collier points out, as "Dyceon of Bedlam," but Diccon of Bedlam is

¹ ["Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute," iii, 130]

a principal character in "Gammer Gurton's Needle," and it is further to be observed that Thomas Colwell is the same publisher, "at the sygne of S John Evangelist, beneth the Conduit in Fleetestreat," by whom the earliest known edition of the present comedy was produced. The circumstance, after all, is as inconclusive as the fact is immaterial. The true subject of regret is, not that we cannot determine precisely whether Still wrote comedy when he was nineteen, or when he was twenty-three, but that having written one play so well, he did not write more. Had he so elected to do, indeed, the See of Bath and Wells might not have seen the name of Still in its *Cutina Episcoporum*, but the other prelate would, doubtless, have done his duty, and English readers would have been amused with further Gammer Gurtons.

"Gammer Gurton's Needle," acted at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1566, "has," writes Mr Collier, "this peculiarity belonging to it, that it is the first existing play acted at either university, and it is a singular coincidence, that the author of the comedy so represented should be the very person who, many years afterward, when he had become Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge was called upon to remonstrate with the Ministers of Queen Elizabeth against having an English play performed before her at that university, as unbefitting its learning, dignity, and character"¹. Of the play itself Hazlitt writes "It is a regular comedy in five acts, built on the circumstance of an old woman having lost

¹ "Annals of the Stage," ii 463

her needle, which throws the whole village into confusion, till it is at last providentially found sticking in an unlucky part of Hodge's dress. This must evidently have happened at a time when the manufacturers of Sheffield and Birmingham had not reached the height of perfection which they have at present done. Suppose that there is only one sewing-needle in a parish, that the owner, a diligent, notable old dame, loses it, that a mischief-making wag sets it about that another old woman has stolen this valuable instrument of household industry, that strict search is made in-doors for it in vain, and that then the incensed parties sally forth to scold it out in the open air, till words end in blows, and the affair is referred over to higher authorities; and we shall have an exact idea (though perhaps not so lively a one) of what passes in this authentic document between Gammer Gurton and her gossip Dame Chat; Diccon, the bedlam (the causer of these harms); Hodge, Gammer Gurton's servant, Tib, her maid, Cock, her prentice boy; Doll, Scapethrift, Master Baillie, his master, Doctor Rat, the curate, and Gib the cat, who may be fairly reckoned one of the *dramatis personæ*, and performs no mean part." "Such," observes the same critic, further on, characterising the comedy, "Such was the wit, such was the mirth of our ancestors—homely, but hearty; coarse, perhaps, but kindly, let no man despise it; for "evil to him that evil thinks" To think it poor and beneath notice, because it is not just like ours, is the same sort of hypercriticism that was exercised by the person who refused to read some

old books because they were "such very poor spelling." The meagreness of their literary or their bodily fare was at least relished by themselves, and this is better than a surfeit or an indigestion. It is refreshing to look out of ourselves sometimes, not to be always holding the glass to our own peerless perfections, and as there is a dead wall which always intercepts the prospect of the future from our view (all that we can see beyond it is the heavens), it is as well to direct our eyes now and then without scorn to the page of history, and repulsed in our attempts to penetrate the secrets of the next six thousand years, not to turn our backs on old long syne¹

This entertaining old piece is mentioned in "Histriomastix," 1610, act II (sign C 3), under the title of 'Mother Gurton's Needle,' and in burlesque it is there called "a Tragedy"

The present edition of "Gammer Gurton's Needle" is printed from that of 1575

¹ "Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth," 1820, p 208

THE NAMES OF THE SPEAKERS IN THIS COMEDY

DICCON ¹ <i>the Bedlam</i> ²	DAML CHAT
HODGE, <i>Gammer Gurton's</i> <i>Servant</i>	DOCTOR RAT, <i>the Curate</i>
TIB, <i>Gammer Gurton's</i> <i>Maid</i>	MASTER BAILY
GAMMER GURTON	DOLL, <i>Dame Chat's Maid</i>
COCK, <i>Gammer Gurton's Boy</i>	SCAPTHRIFT, <i>Master</i> <i>Baily's Servant</i>
	Mutes

¹ The ancient abbreviation of Richard

² After the dissolution of the religious houses where the poor of every denomination were provided for, there was for many years no settled or fixed provision made to supply the want of that care, which those bodies appear always to have taken of their distressed brethren. In consequence of this neglect, the idle and dissolute were suffered to wander about the country, assuming such characters as they imagined were most likely to insure success to their frauds, and security from detection. Among other disguises, many affected madness, and were distinguished by the name of *Bedlam Beggars*. These are mentioned by Edgar in "King Lear"—

"The country gives me proof and precedent,
Of bedlam beggars who, with roaring voices,
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare limbs,
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary,
And with this horrible object from low fums,
Poor pelting villages, sheepcotes, and mills,
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometimes with prayers,
Enforce their charity."

In Dekker's "Belman of London" [1608] all the different species of beggars are enumerated. Amongst the rest

mentioned "Tom of Bedlam's" band of madeaps, otherwise called Poor Tom's flock of wild geese or hair-brains, are called Abraham men. An Abiahram man is afterwards described in this manner "Of all the mad rascalls (that are of this wing) the *Abraham-man* is the most phantastick. The fellow (quoth this old lady of the Lake unto me) that sat halfe naked (at table to day) from the gurdle vpward, is the best *Abraham-man* that euer came to my house, & the notablist villaine he sweares he hath bin in bedlam, and will talke frantickly of purpose you see pinns stuck in sundry places of his naked flesh, especially in his armes, which paine hee gladly puts himselfe to (beeing indeede no torment at all, his skin is either so dead with some fowle disease, or so hardened with weather) onley to make you beleue he is out of his wits he calls himselfe by the name of *Poore Tom*, and comming neere any body cries out, *Poore Tom* is a cold. Of these *Abraham-men*, some be exceeding mery, and doe nothing but sing songs, fashioned out of their owne braines, some will dance, others will doe nothing but either laugh or weepe, others are dogged and are sullen both in looke and speech, that, spying but small company in a house, they boldly and bluntly enter, compelling the seruants through feare to giue them what they demaund which is commonly *bacon*, or something that will yelde ready mony" [Edit 1608, sign D 2] Of this respectable fraternity Diccon seems to have been a member. Massinger mentions them in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," act ii, sc 1 "Are they padders, or *Abraham men* that are your consorts?"

PROLOGUE.

As Gammer Guiton, with many a wide stitch,
Sat piecing and patching of Hodge hei man's breech,
By chance or misfortune, as she her gear toss'd,
In Hodge leather breeches her needle she lost
When Diccon the Bedlam had heard by report,
That good Gammer Guiton was robbed in this sort,
He quietly persuaded with hei in that stound,
Dame Chat, her dear gossip, this needle had found
Yet knew she no more of this matter (alas),
Than knoweth Tom our clerk what the priest
saith at mass

Hereof there ensued so fearful a fray,
Mas Doctor was sent for, these gossips to stay,
Because he was curate and esteemed full wise,
Who found that he sought not, by Diccon's device
When all things were tumbled and clean out of
fashion,

Whether it were by fortune, or some other constellation,

Suddenly the needle Hodge found by the pricking,
And diw it out of his buttock, where he found it
sticking

Their hearts then at rest with perfect security,
With a pot of good nale they struck up their
plaudity.

GAMMER GURTON'S NEEDLE.



THE FIRST ACT.

THE FIRST SCENE

DICCON Many a mile have I walked divers and
sundry ways,
And many a good man's house have I been at in
my days,
Many a gossip's cup in my time have I tasted,
And many a broach and spit have I both turned
and basted,
Many a piece of bacon have I had out of their
balks,¹
In running over the country with long and weary
walks
Yet came my foot never within those door cheeks,
To seek flesh or fish, garlick, onions, or leeks,
That ever I saw a sort in such a plight,²

¹ The summer beam or dorman Poles laid over a stable or other building — Ray's "Collection of English Words," p 167

² *A sort* is a company So in Jonson's "Every man out of his Humour," act ii, sc 3 "I speak it not gloriously, nor out of affectation, but there's he and the count Frugale,

As here within this house appeareth to my sight,
 There is howling and scowling, all cast in a dump,
 With whewling and puling, as though they had
 lost a trump.

Sighing and sobbing, they weep and they wail.
 I marvel in my mind what the devil they ail.
 The old trot sits groaning with alas and alas,¹
 And Tib wrings her hands and takes on in worse
 case.

With poor Cock their boy, they be driven in such
 fits,

signior Illustre, signior Luculento, and a *sort* of them," &c. Also, in Nash's "Pierce Pennilesse," 1592, p. 6, "I know a great *sort* of good fellows that would venture," &c. Again, in the "Vocacyon of Johan Bale," 1533: "In parell of pyrates, robbers, and murthirors, and a great *sort* more." And in Skelton's Works, edit. 1736, p. 136—

"Another *sorte* of sluttes
 Some brought walnutes."

See also Dr Johnson and Mr Steevens's Notes on Shakspeare, Vol. III. p. 69.

¹ An old *trot* or *trat*, Dr Grey says, signifies a decrepid old woman or an old drab. In which sense it is used in Gawin Douglas' Virgil, B. iv. p. 96, 97—

"Out on the *old trat* agit wyffe or dame."

And p. 122, 39 :

"Thus saith *Dido*, and the tother with that,
 Hyt or furth with slow pase like *ane trot*."

And Shakspeare: "Why give her gold enough, and marry him to a puppet, aglet baby, or an *old trot* with ne'er a tooth in her head" (*Taming of the Shrew*, act i., sc. 5; Critical Notes on Shakspeare, Vol. I. p. 118.) It is also used by Churchyard—

"Away young Frie that gives leawd counsel, nowe,
 Awale *old trotts*, that sets young flesh to sale," &c.

—*Challenge*, 1693, p. 250.

And by Gascoigne :

"Goe : that gunne poulder consume the *old trotte* !"

—*Supposes*, act iii., sc. 5. [Hazlitt's edit. i. 230.]

Again, in Nash's "Lenten Stuff," 1599: "A cage or

I fear me the folks be not well in their wits
 Ask them what they ail, or who brought them in
 this stay?²
 They answer not at all, but alack and wellaway
 When I saw it booted not, out at doors I hied me,
 And caught a slip of bacon, when I saw none spied
 me,
 Which I intend not far hence, unless my purpose
 fail,
 Shall serve me for a shoeing horn to draw on two
 pots of ale¹

THE FIRST ACT

THE SECOND SCENE

HODGE, DICCON

HODGE See, so cham arrayed² with dabbling in
 the dirt!
 She that set me to ditching, ich would she had the
 squirt

pigeon house, roomsome enough to comprehend her, and the toothless *trout* her nurse, who was her only chat mate and chamber maid," &c

See also Mr Steevens's Notes on Shakspeare, Vol II p 93

¹ So in Nash's "Pierce Pennilesse," p. 23, "we have generall rules and injunctions as good as printed precepts, or statutes set downe by acte of parliament, that goe from drunkard to drunkard as still to keepe your first man, not to leave anie flockes in the bottom of the cup, to knock the glasse on your thumbe when you have done, to have some *shooring horne* to pull on your wine, as a rasher of the coles, or a *redd* herring" Again in Nash's "Lenten Stuff," 1599, "which being double roasted, and dried as it is, not only sucks up all the rheumatick inundations, but is a *shoeing horn* for a pint of wine overplus"

² [Soiled]

Was never poor soul that such a life had ?
Gog's bones, this vilthy glay has dress'd me too
bad
Gog's soul, see how this stuff tears !
Ich were better to be a bearward, and set to keep
bears.
By the mass, here is a gash, a shameful hole^{indeed},
And one stitch tear further, a man may thrust in
his head
DICCON By my father's soul, Hodge, if I should
now be swain,
I cannot choose but say thy breech is foul betorn
But the next remedy in such a case and hap
Is to planch¹ on a piece as broad as thy cap
HODGE Gog's soul, man, 'tis not yet two days
fully ended,
Since my dame Gurton (cham sure) these breeches
amended.
But cham made such a drudge to trudge at every
need,
Chwold rend it, though it were stiched with sturdy
packthread
DICCON Hodge, let thy breeches go, and speak
and tell me soon,
What devil aileth Gammer Gurton, and Tib her
maid to frown
HODGE Tush, man, th'art deceived, 'tis then
daily look

¹ A *planch* is a plank of wood To *planch* therefore is a verb formed from it See "Measure for Measure," Vol. II, edit 1778, p 106 —S

The above note but ill explains its meaning, the word will be better illustrated by the following description of the fortification of Ypres by Holinshed "It was fenced with a mighty rampire and a thicke hedge, trimlie *planshed*, and woond with thornes," &c —*Chron* 2 759 Ed 1807 —O G

They cow'r¹ so over the coals, their eyes be blear'd
with smoke

DICCON Nay, by the mass, I perfectly perceived
as I came hither,

That either Tib and her dame hath been by the
ears together,

Or else as great a matter, as thou shalt shortly see
HODGE Now ich beseech our Lord they never
better agree

DICCON By Gog's soul, there they sit as still as
stones in the street,

As though they had been taken with fairies, or else
with some ill-spreet

HODGE Gog's heart, I durst have laid my cap
to a crown,

Ch'would leain of some prancome, as soon as ich
came to town

DICCON Why, Hodge, art thou inspired? or
didst thou thereof hear?

HODGE Nay, but ich saw such a wonder, as ich
saw nat this seven year

¹ This is the reading of the first edition, which in all the subsequent ones is very improperly altered to *cover*. *To cover*, is to bend, stoop, hang, or lean over. See Beaumont and Fletcher's "Monsieur Thomas," act iv, sc 6, and Nash's "Pierce Pennilesse," 1592, p 8

Again—

"He much rejoyst, and *cowr'd* it tenderly,
As chicken newly hatcht, from dreaded destiny"—
Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, B ii, c 8 sc 9

So in Shakspeare's "King Henry VI" Part II vol vi,
p 362, edit 1778—

"The splitting rocks *cowr'd* in the sinking sand"—S

Again—

"As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
Approaching two and two, these *cow ring* low
With blandishment, each bird stoop'd on his wing"
—*Paradise Lost*, B viii, l 349.

Tom Tankard's cow (by Gog's bones) she set me
up her sail,
And flinging about his halse aker,¹ fisking with her
tail,
As though there had been in her arse a swarm of
bees ;

And chad not cued tphrowh, whore, shea'd leapt
out of his lees

DICCON Why, Hodge, lies the cunning in Tom
Tankard's cow's tail ?

HODGE Well, ich chawe heard some say such
tokens do not fail

But ca'st thou not tell, in faith, Diccon, why she
frowns, or whereat ?

Hath no man stolen her ducks or hens, or gelded
Gib her cat ?²

DICCON What devil can I tell, man, I could not
have one word,

They gave no more heed to my talk than thou
wouldst to a lord

HODGE Ich cannot skill but muse, what mar-
vellous thing it is

Chill in and know myself what matters are amiss

DICCON Then farewell, Hodge, a while, since
thou dost inward haste,

For I will into the good wife Chat's, to feel how
the ale doth taste

¹ I believe we should read *halse anchor*, or *anker*, as it was
anciently spelt, a naval phrase. The *halse* or *halser* was a
particular kind of cable. Shakspeare, in his "Antony and
Cleopatra," has an image similar to this—

"The brize upon her, like a cow in June,
Hoists sail and flies"—S

² Gib was the name by which all male or ram cats were
distinguished. See Warton's Note on the "First Part of
Henry IV," act 1, sc 2.

THE FIRST ACT

THE THIRD SCENE

HODGE, TIB.

HODGE Cham aghast, by the mass, ich wot not
what to do

Chad need bless me well, before ich go them to
Perchance some felon sprit may haunt our house
indeed

And then chwere but a noddy to venture, where cha'
no need

TIB Cham worse than mad, by the mass, to be
at this stay,

Cham chid, cham blam'd, and beaten all th' hours on
the day

Lamed and hunger-staived, pricked up all in jags,
Having no patch to hide my back, save a few rotten
rags

HODGE I say, Tib, if thou be Tib, as I trow
sure thou be,

What devil make-a-do is this between our dame
and thee?

TIB Gog's bread, Hodge, thou had a good turn,
thou wert not here this while

It had been better for some of us to have been
hence a mile

My gammer is so out of course, and frantic all at
once,

That Cock our boy and I, poor wench, have felt it
on our bones

HODGE What is the matter, say on, Tib, whereat
she taketh so on?

TIB She is undone, she saith (alas) her joy and
life is gone

If she hear not of some comfort, she saith she is
but dead,

Shall never come within her lips one inch of meat
ne bread

HODGE By'r lady, cham not very glad to see
her in this dump,

Chold a noble her stool hath fallen, and she hath
broke her rump

TIB Nay, and that were the worst, we would
not greatly care,

For bursting¹ of her huckle-bone or breaking of
her chair,

But greater, greater is her grief, as, Hodge, we
shall all feel

HODGE Gog's wounds, Tib, my gammer has
never lost her nee'le ?

TIB Her nee'le !

HODGE Her nee'le ?

TIB Her nee'le, by him that made me, it is
true, Hodge, I tell thee

HODGE Gog's sacrament ! I would she had lost
th' heart out of her belly

The devil or else his dame, they ought thei sure a shame,
How a murrion came this chance, (say, Tib) unto
our dame ?

¹ i e, Breaking See Note on "King Henry IV," Part II, edit 1778, vol v, p 537 —S

From the following passage, in a letter from Mr Sterne, dated August 11, 1767, it appears that the word was then still used in the same sense among the common people in the north of England "My postilion has set me a-ground for a week, by one of my pistols bursting in his hand, which he, taking for granted to be quite shot off, he instantly fell upon his knees, and said, 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,' at which, like a good Christian, he stopped, not remembering any more of it, the affair was not so bad as he at first thought, for it has only *bursten* two of his fingers, he says "

TIB My gammer sat her down on her pes,¹ and
bad me reach thy breeches,
And by and by, a vengeance in it, ere she had take
two stitches,
To clout a clout upon thine arse, by chance aside
• she leers,
And Gib our cat in the milk-pan she spied over
head and ears
Ah whore, out these, she cried aloud, and swept
the breeches down,
Up went her staff, and out leapt Gib at doors into
the town
And since that time was, never wight could set
their eyes upon it
Gog's malison chawe Cock and I bid twenty
times light on it ²
HODGE And is not then my breeches sewed up,
to-morrow that I should wear?
TIB No, in faith, Hodge, thy breeches lie, for
all this never the near
HODGE Now a vengeance light on all the sort,
that better should have kept it,
The cat, the house, and Tib our maid, that better
should have swept it
See where she cometh crawling ' come on, in
twenty devils' way,
Ye have made a fair day's work, have you not,
pray you say?

THE FIRST ACT

THE FOURTH SCENE

GAMMER, HODGE, TIB, COCK

GAMMER. Alas, alas, I may well curse and ban

¹ [Haunch See Halliwell's "Dict v Pesate"]

² i e, God's curse Glossary to Peter Langtoft

This day, that ever I saw it, with Gib and the
milk-pan

For these and ill luck together, as knoweth Cock
my boy,

Have stack¹ away my dear nee'le, and robbed me
of my joy

My fair long straight nee'le, that was mine only
treasure,

The first day of my sorrow is, and last end of my
pleasure

HODGE (*aside*) Might ha' kept it, when ye had
it, but fools will be fools still

Lose that is vast in your hands² ye need not, but
ye will

GAMMER Go hie thee, Tib, and run, thou whoie,
to the end here of the town

Didst carry out dust in thy lap² seek where thou
pourest it down,

And as thou sawest me raking in the ashes where
I mourned,

So see in all the heap of dust thou leave no straw
unturnd

TIB That chall, Gammer, swyth and tite,² and
soon be here again

GAMMER Tib, stoop and look down to the
ground to it, and take some pain

HODGE Here is a pretty matter, to see this gear
how it goes

¹ Mr Dodsley, in the former edition, reads *tack*

² Swiftly and directly—

Kyng Estmere threwe the harpe asyde

And *swyth* he drew his brand,

And Estmere he and Alder yonge,

Right stiffe in stout can stand

—Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*,

[Ed 1765] vol 1, p 75

Hence *swythe* to Doctor Rat hie thee, that thou were gone

—Act III, sc 3

Thou shalt find lying an inch of white tallow candle

Light it, and bring it *tite* away

—Act I, sc 4

By Gog's soul, I think you would lose your arse,
and it were loose
Your nee'le lost? it is pity you should lack care
and endless sorrow

Gog's death, how shall my breeches be sewed?
Shall I go thus to-morrow?

GAMMER Ah, Hodge, Hodge, if that ich could
find my nee'le, by the reed,
Ch'ould sew thy breeches, ich promise thee, with
full good double thread,
And set a patch on either knee should last this
moneths twain,
Now God and good Saint Sithe, I pray to send it
home² again

HODGE Whereto served your hands and eyes,
but this your nee'le to keep?
What devil had you else to do? ye keep, ich wot,
no sheep
Cham fain abroad to dig and delve, in water, mire,
and clay,
Sossing and possing in the dirt still from day to
day

A hundred things that be abroad cham set to see
them well
And four of you sit idle at home, and cannot keep
a nee'le¹

GAMMER My nee'le, alas, ich lost it, Hodge, what
time ich me up hasted,
To save milk set up for thee, which Gib our cat
hath wasted

HODGE The devil he burst both Gib and Tib,
with all the rest,
Cham always sure of the worst end, whoever have
the best

¹ Perhaps a corruption of Saint Swithun — S

² Mr Dodsley reads, *back again*

Where ha' you been fidging abroad, since you your
nee'le lost?

GAMMER Within the house, and at the door,
sitting by this same post,
Where I was looking a long hour, before these
folks came here,
But, wellaway! all was in vain, my nee'le is never
the near

HODGE Set me a candle, let me seek, and
grope wherever it be
Gog's heart, ye be foolish (ich think), you know it
not, when you it see

GAMMER Come hither, Cock what, Cock, I say

COCK How, Gammer?

GAMMER Go, hie thee soon, and grope behind
the old brass pan,
Which thing when thou hast done,
There shalt thou find an old shoe, wherein, if thou
look well,
Thou shalt find lying an inch of white tallow
candle,

Light it, and bring it tite away

COCK That shall be done anon

GAMMER Nay, tarry, Hodge, till thou hast light,
and then we'll seek each one

HODGE Come away, ye whoreson boy, are ye
asleep? ye must have a crier

COCK Ich cannot get the candle light here is
almost no fire

HODGE Chill hold thee a penny, chill make thee
come, if that ich may catch thine ears.
Art deaf, thou whoreson boy? Cock, I say, why,
canst not hear?

GAMMER Beat him not, Hodge, but help the
boy, and come you two together.

THE FIRST ACT.

THE FIFTH SCENE.

GAMMER, TIB, COCK, HODGE

GAMMER How now, Tib ! quick, let's hear what news thou hast brought hither ?

TIB Chave tost and tumbled yonder heap over and over again,

And winnowed it through my fingers, as men would winnow grain ,

Not so much as a hen's turd, but in pieces I tare it. Or whatsoever clod or clay I found, I did not spare it

Looking within and eke without, to find your nee'le (alas)

But all in vain and without help your nee'le is where it was

GAMMER Alas, my nee'le, we shall never meet ! adieu, adieu, for aye.

TIB Not so, Gammer, we might it find, if we knew where it lay

COCK Gog's cross, Gammer, if ye will laugh, look in but at the door,

And see how Hodge lieth trembling and tossing amidst the flour

Raking there some fire to find among the ashes dead, Where there is not one spark so big as a pin's head

At last in a dark corner two sparks he thought he sees,

Which were indeed nought else but Gib our cat's two eyes

Puff, quod Hodge, thinking thereby to have fire without doubt ,

With that Gib shut her two eyes, and so the fire
was out,
And by and by them opened, even as they were
before,
With that the sparks appeared even as they had
done of yore,
And even as Hodge blew the fire (as he did think),
Gib, as she felt the blast, straightway began to
wink,
Till Hodge fell of swearing, as came best to his
turn,
The fire was sure bewitch'd, and therefore would
not burn
At last Gib up the stairs, among the old posts and
pins,
And Hodge he hied him after, till broke were both
his shins
Cussing and swearing oaths were never of his
making,
That Gib would fire the house, if that she were
not taken
GAMMER See, here is all the thought that the
foolish uchin taketh '
And Tib, me-think, at his elbow almost as merry
maketh
This is all the wit ye have, when others make then
moan
Come down, Hodge, where art thou? and let the
cat alone
HODGE Gog's heart, help and come up · Gib in
her tail hath fire,
And is like to burn all, if she get a little higher
Come down (quoth you?) nay, then you might
count me a patch,¹

¹ "This term," says Mr Malone, "came into use from the name of a celebrated fool This I learn from Wilson's

The house cometh down on your heads, if it take
once the thatch

GAMMER It is the cat's eyes, fool, that shineth
in the dark

HODGE Hath the cat, do you think, in every
eye a spark?

GAMMER No, but they shine as like fire as ever
man see

HODGE By the mass, and she burn all, you sh'
bear the blame for me

GAMMER Come down and help to seek here our
nee'le, that it were found,

Down, Tib, on *thy* knees, I say, down, Cock, to the
ground.

'Art of Rhetorique,' 1553 'A word making, called of the
Grecians Onomatopoeia, is when we make words of our own
mind, such as be derived from the nature of things, as to
call one *patche*, or cowlson, whom we see to do a thing
foolishly, because these two in their time were notable
fools

"Probably the *diess* which the celebrated *patch* wore was
in allusion to his name, patched or parti-coloured. Hence
the stage-fool has ever since been exhibited in a motley
coat. In Rowley's 'When you see me, you know me,'
Cardinal Wolsey's fool *Patch* is introduced. Perhaps he
was the original *patch* of whom Wilson speaks"—Note on
"Merchant of Venice," act ii sc 5

In Chaloner's translation of the "Praise of Folke," by
Erasmus, 1549, is the following passage "And by the
fayeth ye owe to the immortal godds, may any thing to an
indifferent considerer be deemed more happie and blisful
than is this kinde of men whome commonly ye call fooles,
poltes, ideotes, and *paches*?"

Again, "I have subtraied these my selie *pache*, who not
onelye themselves are ever mery, playing, singing, and
laughyng, but also whatever they doo, are provokers of
others lykewyse to pleasure, sporte, and laughter, as who
sayeth ordeyned herefore by the Godds of theyr benevolence
to recreate the sadnesse of mens lyves"

To God I make a vow, and so to good Saint
Anne,¹
A candle shall they have a-piece, get it where I
can,
If I may my nee'le find in one place or in other
HODGE Now a vengeance on Gib light, on Gib
and Gib's mother
And all the generation of cats both far and near
Look on the ground, whoreson, thinks thou the
nee'le is here ?
COCK By my troth, Gammer, me-thought you
nee'le here I saw,
But when my fingers touch'd it, I felt it was a
straw.
TIB See, Hodge, what's t'is, may it not be
within it ?
HODGE Break it, fool, with thy hand, and see,
and thou canst find it
TIB Nay, break it you, Hodge, according to
your word
HODGE Gog's sides, fie ! it stinks it is a cat's
turd
It were well done to make thee eat it, by the
mass
GAMMER This matter amendeth not, my nee'le
is still where it was
Our candle is at an end, let us all in quite,
And come another time, when we have more light

¹ In all cases of distress, and whenever the assistance of a superior power was necessary, it was usual with the Roman Catholics to promise their tutelary saints to light up candles at their altars, to induce them to be propitious to such applications as were made to them. The reader will see a very ridiculous story of this kind in the first volume of Lord Oxford's "Collection of Voyages," p 771, quoted in Dr Grey's "Notes on Shakspeare," vol 1 p 7 Erasmus has a story to the same purpose in his "Naufragium "

THE SECOND ACT

*First a SONG*¹

*Back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold
But, belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old.*

*I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good,
But sure I think, that I can drink
With him that wears a hood²
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I am nothing a-cold,
I stuff my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old
Back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold
But, belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old*

*I love no roast but a nut-brown toast,³
And a crab laid in the fire
A little bread shall do me stead
Much bread I not desire*

¹ [Respecting this song, see Bell's "Songs from the Dramatists," p 34]

² Alluding to the drunkenness of the Friars

³ So in act III, sc 4—

"A cup of ale had in his hand, and a crab lay in the fire"

Again—

"Now a crab in the fire were worth a good goat,
That I might quaff with my Captain Tom tospot"

—Fulwell's *Luke will to Luke*, c 2

No frost nor snow, no wind, I trow,
 Can hurt me if I would,
 I am so wapt, and thoroughly lapt
 Of jolly good ale and old
 Back and side go bare, &c

And Tib my wife, that as her life
 Loveth well good ale to seek,
 Full oft drinks she, till ye may see
 The tears run down her cheek,
 Then doth she trowl to me the bowl¹
 Even as a malt worm should,
 And saith, sweet heart, I have take my part
 Of this jolly good ale and old.
 Back and side go bare, &c.

Again—

"And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
 In very likeness of a roasted crab"
 —*Midsummer Night's Dream*, act II, sc 1

Upon this last passage, Mr Steevens has given the following examples of the use of this word—

"Yet we will have in store a crab in the fire,
 With nut brown ale"—*Henry V*, Anon
 "And sit down in my chaire by my faire Alison,
 And turn a crabbe in the fire as merry as Pope John"
 —*Edwards's Damon and Pithias*
 "Sitting in a corner turning crabs,
 Or coughing o'er a waimed pot of ale"
 —*Description of Christmas in Summer's last Will
 and Testament*, by Nash, 1600

¹ *Trowl*, or *trole the bowl*, was a common phrase in drinking for passing the vessel about, as appears by the following beginning of an old catch—

"*Trole trole the bowl to me,
 And I will trole the same again to thee*"

And in this other, in Hilton's Collection—

"Tom Boulds, Tom Boulds,
 Seest thou not how merrily this good ale *trowles*?"
 —Sir John Hawkins's *History of Music*, Vol III, 22

*Now let them drink, till they nod and wink,
 Even as good fellows should do,
 They shall not miss to have the bliss
 Good ale doth bring men to,
 And all poor souls that have scoured bowls,
 Or have them lustily troll'd,
 God save the lives of them and their wives,
 Whether they be young or old
 Back and side go bare, &c*

THE FIRST SCENE

DICCON, HODGE

DICCON Well done, by Gog's malt, well sung
 and well said
 Come on, mother Chat, as thou art a¹ true maid,
 One fresh pot of ale let's see, to make an end,
 Against this cold weather my naked arms² to de-
 fend
 This gear it warms the soul now, wind, blow on
 thy worst,

Again—

"Sirs Shakebagge, canst thou remember
 Since we trowd the boule at Sittingburn
 — *1, den of Feverham, 1592*

"Giv t us weele pledge, nor shall a man that lives
 In charity refuse it, I will not beso old
 As not be giac t to honour Cupid, giv t us full
 When we were young, we could ha trowd it off
 Diunke down a Dutchman"
 — *Marston's Parasitaster or The Fawne, act v*

"Now the cups trole about to wet the gossips whistles,
 It pours down, I faith, they never think of payment"
 — *A Chast Mayd in Cheap side, p 34*

And let us drink and swill till that our bellies
burst,

Now were he a wise man, by cunning could define
Which way my journey lieth, or where Diccon
will dine

But one good turn I have, be it by night or day,
South, east, north, or west, I am never out of ^{my}
way

HODGE Chim goodly rewarded, cham I not, do
you think ?

Chad a goodly dinner for all my sweat and swink ¹
Neither butter, cheese, milk, onions, flesh, nor
fish,

Save this piece of barley-bread 'tis a pleasant costly
dish ¹

DICCON Hail, fellow Hodge, and well ² to fare
with thy meat, if you have any .

But by thy words, as I them smelled, thy dainties
be not many

HODGE Dainties, Diccon ! Gog's soul, man, save
this piece of dry horsebread,

¹ *To swink* is to work or labour, as in Spenser's "Fairy Queen," B II, cant vii, st 8

"For which men sweat and *swink* incessantly "

Again in "Comus," l 293—

"And the *swink't* hedger at his supper sat "

Also in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," Prol, l 184—

"What schulde he studie make himselven wood,
Uppon a book in cloystre alway to powre,
Or *swinke* with his hands and labour,
As Austin byt ? how schal the world be served ?
Let Austyn have his *swynk* to him reserved "

And in "Pierce Plowman's Vision"—

"He mets an heape with hoked staves,
Wenten to Walsingham, and her wenches after
Great loubes and long, that loth were to *swinke*,
Clothed hem in copes, to be knowen from othei "

² Will

Chat bit no bit this livelong day, no crumb come
in my head

My guts they yawl, crawl, and all my belly rum-
bleth,

The puddings cannot lie still, each one over other
tumbleth

By Gog's heart, cham so vexed, and in my belly
penn'd,

Chould one piece were at the spital-house, another
at the castle's end

DICCON Why, Hodge, was there none at home
thy dinner for to set?

HODGE Gog's bread, Diccon, ich came too late,
was nothing there to get

Gib (a foul fiend might on her light) licked the
milk-pan so clean,

See, Diccon, 'twas not so well washed this seven
year, as ich ween

A pestilence light on all ill-luck, chad thought yet
for all this

Of a morsel of bacon behind the door at worst
should not miss

But when ich sought a ship to cut, as ich was wont
to do,

Gog's souls, Diccon, Gib our cat had eat the bacon
too

[*Which bacon Diccon stole, as is declared before*

DICCON Ill-luck, quod he? marry, swear it,
Hodge, this day the truth tell,

Thou rose not on thy right side, or else blessed
thee not well

Thy milk slopped up! thy bacon filched! that was
too bad luck, Hodge

HODGE Nay, nay, there was a fouler fault, my
Gammer ga' me the dodge

Seest not how cham rent and torn, my heels, my
knees, and my breech?

Chad thought, as ich sat by the fire, help here and
there a stitch,

But there ich was pouped indeed

DICCON Why, Hodge?

HODGE Boots not, man, to tell,

Cham so drest amongst a sort of fools, chad better
be in hell,

My Gammer (cham ashamed to say) by God, served
me not well

DICCON How so, Hodge?

HODGE Has she not gone, trowest now thou,
and lost her nee'le?

DICCON Her eel, Hodge! who fished of late?
that was a dainty dish

HODGE Tush, tush, her nee'le, her nee'le, her
nee'le, man 'tis neither flesh nor fish,

A little thing with an hole in the end, as bright as
any sil'er,

Small, long, sharp at the point, and straight as
any pillar

DICCON I know not what a devil thou meanest,
thou bring'st me more in doubt

HODGE Knowest not with what Tom-tailor's
man sits broaching through a clout?

A nee'le, a nee'le, a nee'le, my Gammer's nee'le is
gone

DICCON Her nee'le! Hodge, now I smell thee;
that was a chance alone

By the mass, thou hast a shameful loss, and it were
but for thy breeches

HODGE Gog's soul, man, should give a crown,
chad it but three stitches

DICCON How sayest thou, Hodge? what should
he have, again thy needle got?

HODGE By m' father's soul, and chad it, should
give him a new groat

DICCON Canst thou keep counsel in this case?

HODGE Else chwold my tongue were out

DICCON Do thou¹ but then by my advice, and
I will fetch it without doubt

HODGE Chill run, chill ride, chill dig, chill
delve,

Chill toil, chill trudge, shalt see,

Chill hold, chill draw, chill pull, chill pinch,

Chill kneel on my bare knee,

Chill scrape, chill scratch, chill sift, chill seek,

Chill bow, chill bend, chill sweat,

Chill stoop, chill stour, chill cap, chill kneel,

Chill creep on hands and feet,

Chill be thy bondman, Diccon, ich swear by sun
and moon,

And channot somewhat to stop this gap, cham
utterly undone

[Pointing behind to his torn breeches]

DICCON Why, is there any special cause thou
takest hereat such sorrow?

HODGE Kirstian Clack, Tom Simson's maid, by
the mass, comes hither to-morrow

Cham not able to say between us what may hap,
She smiled on me the last Sunday, when ich put off
my cap

DICCON Well, Hodge, this is a matter of weight,
and must be kept close,

It might else turn to both our costs, as the world
now goes²

¹ Old copy, *than*

² In the 14th of Queen Elizabeth, 1572, an Act of Parliament passed, by which very heavy penalties were inflicted on all rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars. Among others, who are therein described and directed to be deemed such, are idle persons going about feigning themselves to have knowledge in phisnomie, palmestrie, or other abused sciences, whereby they bear the people in hand that they can tell their destinies, deaths, and fortunes, *and such other like fantastical*

Shalt swear to be no blab, Hodge?

HODGE. Chill, Diccon

DICCON Then go to,
Lay thine hand here, say after me, as thou shalt
hear me do

Hast no book?

HODGE Cha no book, I

DICCON Then needs must force us both,
Upon my breech to lay thine hand, and there to
take thine oath

HODGE I, Hodge breechless,
Swear to Diccon rechless
By the cross that I shall kiss,
To keep his counsel close,
And always me to dispose
To work that his pleasure is

[Here he kisseth Diccon's breech]

DICCON Now, Hodge, see thou take heed,
And do as I thee bid,
For so I judge it meet,
This needle again to win,
There is no shift therein,
But conjue up a spreet

HODGE What the great devil, Diccon, I say?

DICCON Yea, in good faith, that is the way,
Fet¹ with some pretty charm.

HODGE Soft, Diccon, be not too hasty yet,
By the mass, for ich begin to sweat,
Cham afraid of some² harm

DICCON Come hither then, and stir thee not
One inch out of this circle plat,
But stand, as I thee teach

imaginations This statute seems to be alluded to here by Diccon, and will serve to confirm the later date of the play, and at the same time prove the forgery of that assigned to it by Chetwood

¹ Fetched

² Old copy, *syme*

HODGE And shall ich be here safe from their claws ?

DICCON The master-devil with his long paws
Here to thee cannot reach—
Now will I settle me to this gear

HODGE I say, Diccon, hear me, hear
Go softly to this matter

DICCON What devil, man, art afraid of nought ?

HODGE Canst not tarry a little thought
Till ich make a courtesy of water ?¹

DICCON Stand still to it, why shouldest thou
fear him ?

HODGE Gog's sides, Diccon, me-think ich hear him,
And tarry, chall mar all

DICCON The matter is no worse than I told it

HODGE By the mass, cham able no longer to
hold it

So² bad, ich must betray the hall

DICCON Stand to it, Hodge, stin not, you whore-
son

What devil, be thine arse-strings brusten ?

Thyself a while but stay,

The devil (I smell him) will be here anon

HODGE Hold him fast, Diccon, cham gone, cham
gone,

Chull not be at that fray

THE SECOND ACT

THE SECOND SCENE

DICCON, CHAT.

DICCON Fie, shitten knave, and out upon thee !
Above all other louts, fie on thee !

¹ " Ut mulieres solent ad mingendum "—S

² To

Is not here a cleanly prank?¹
 But thy matter was no better,
 Nor thy presence here no sweeter,
 To fly I con¹ thee thank²
 Here is a matter worthy glosing³
 Of Gammer Gurton's needle losing,
 And a foul piece of wark
 A man, I think, might make a play
 And need no word to this they say,
 Being but half a clerk
 Soft, let me alone, I will take the charge
 This matter further to enlarge
 Within a time short,
 If ye will mark my toys, and note,
 I will give ye leave to cut my throat
 If I make no good sport

¹ Can

² I con him no thanks for it, occurs in Shakspeare's "All's Well that Ends Well," and Mr Steevens says it means, "I shall not thank him in studied language" I meet with the same expression in Nash's "Pierce Pennilesse," &c —

"I believe he *will con thee little thanks for it*"

Again, in "Wily Beguiled," 1606—

"I con master Churms *thanks for this*"

Again, in "Anything for a Quiet Life" "He would not trust you with it, I *con* him thanks for it"

Cun or *con thanks*, says the "Glossary to the Lancashire Dialect," is to *give thanks*, and in that sense only the words appear to be used to this day in the North of England In Erasmus's "Praise of Folly," by Chaloner, 1549, sig E 2 "But in the meane while ye ought to *conne me thanke*," &c, and sig I 4 "Who natheless *conned him as greate thanke*," &c Again, in Nash's "Pierce Pennilesse," p 28 "It is well doone 'to practise thy wit, but (I believe) our Lord will *cun thee little thanke for it*'"

³ *re*, Glossing or commenting upon So, in "Pierce Plowman"

⁴ *Glosed* the Gospel as hem good liked,
 For covetous of copes construe it as thei wold "

Dame Chat, I say, where be ye within?

CHAT Who have we there maketh such a din?

DICCON Here is a good fellow maketh no great danger

CHAT What, Diccon? come neal, ye be no stranger

We be fast set at trump,¹ man, hard by the fire,
Thou shalt set on the king, if thou come a little nigher

DICCON Nay, nay, there is no tariying I must be gone again,
But fist for you in counsel² I have a woid or twain

CHAT Come hither, Doll, Doll, sit down and play this game,
And as thou sawest me do, see thou do even the same

There is five trumps besides the queen, the hind-most thou shalt find her,

Take heed of Sim Glover's wife, she hath an eye behind her

Now, Diccon, say your will

DICCON Nay, soft a little yet,
I would not tell my sister, the matter is so great,
There, I will have you swear by Our Dear Lady of Boulogne,³

¹ Trump was a game played with cards, as will appear by the following passage of Dekker's "Bellman of London," 1608, sig F "To speak of all the slights used by *Card-players* in al sorts of Games would but weary you that are to read, and bee but a thanklesse and unpleasing labour for me to set them downe Omitting therefore the deceipts practised (even in the farrest & most ciuill companies) at Primero, Saunt, Maw, *Tromp*, and such like games, I will," &c [See Nares, *v Trump*]

² *ve*, In secrecy See note to the "Merry Wives of Windsor," edit 1778, vol 1, p 228—S

³ Our dear Lady of Boulogne is no other than the image

Saint Dunstan and Saint Dominic, with the three
 Kings of Cologne,¹
 That ye shall keep it secret
 CHAT Gog's bread, that will I do,
 As secret as mine own thought, by God and the
 devil too ²

of the Virgin Mary at Boulogne, which was formerly held in so much reverence, that it was one of those to which Pilgrimages used to be made In Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," Prol 1 465, describing the "Wife of Bath," he says—

"And thries hadde sche ben at Jerusalem
 Sche hadde passed many a straunge stieem
 At Rome sche hadde ben and at *Boloyne*
 In Galice at seynt Jame, and at Coloyne "

The Virgin Mary was the patroness of the town of Boulogne in a very singular manner, it being holden immediately of her "For when King Lewis II, after the decease of Charles of Burgundy, had taken in Boulogne, anno 1477, as new Lord of the town (thus John de Serres relateth it), he did homage without sword or spurs bareheaded, and on his knee, before the Virgin Mary, offering unto her image an heart of massie gold, weighing 2000 crowns He added also this, that he and his successors, kings after him, should hold the county of Boulogne of the said Virgin, and do homage unto her image in the great church of the higher town dedicated to her name, paying at every change of a vassal an heart of pure gold of the same weight"—Heylin's "Survey of France," 1656, p 193

¹ The three kings of Cologne are supposed to have been the wise men who travelled unto our Saviour by the direction of the star To these kings several writers have given the names of Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, but Sir Thomas Browne, in his "Vulgar Errors," has a whole chapter concerning them, in which he doubts all the principal facts in the account of them See B vii, c 8 The celebrated Thomas Coryat, when at Cologne, took some pains to collect many circumstances relative to these kings, with which he hath filled several pages of his book, and to which those who are desirous of further information on the subject must be referred

² Two.

DICCON Here is Gammer Gurton, your neighbour, a sad and heavy wight,
Her goodly fair red cock at home was stole this last night

CHAT Gog's soul ! her cock with the yellow legs,
that nightly crowded ¹ so just ?

DICCON That cock is stolen

CHAT What, was he fet out of the hen's roost ?

DICCON. I cannot tell where the devil he was kept under key or lock,
But Tib hath tickled in Gammer's ear, that you should steal the cock

CHAT Have I, strong whore ! by bread and salt ²—

DICCON What, soft, I say, be still
Say not one word for all this gear

CHAT By the mass, that I will,
I will have the young whore by the head and the old trot by the throat

DICCON Not one word, dame Chat, I say, not one word for my coat

CHAT Shall such a beggar's brawl ³ as that, thinkest thou, make me a thief ?
The pox light on her whore's sides, a pestilence and mischief !

¹ A crowd is a small fiddle Hence the name of *Crowdcro*, in *Hudibras* *Crowded* means—made a musical noise —S

² This oath occurs again, act v, sc 2—

“ Yet shall ye find no other wight save she, by *bread and salt* ”

From the following passage, in Nash's “*Lenten Stuff*,” 1599, it may be inferred that it was once customary to eat *bread and salt* previous to the taking an oath “Venus for Hero was her Priest, and Juno Lucina the Midwife's Goddess for she was now quickened, and cast away by the cruelty of Æolus, took *bread and salt*, and eat it, that they would be smartly revenged on that truculent, windy jailor,” &c

³ [Brat]

Come out, thou hungry needy bitch , O, that my
nails be short !

DICCON Gog's bread, woman, hold your peace,
this gear will else pass sport ,
I would not for an hundred pound this matter
should be known

That I am author of this tale, or have abroad it
blown

Did ye not swear ye would be ruled, before the tale
I told ?

I said ye must all secret keep, and ye said sure ye
would

CHAT Would you suffer, yourself, Diccon, such
a sort to revile you
With slanderous words to blot your name, and so
to defile you ?

DICCON No, good wife Chat, I would be loth
such drabs should blot my name ,
But yet ye must so order all, that Diccon bear no
blame

CHAT Go to, then, what is your need,¹ say on
your mind, ye shall me rule herein

¹ Counsel or advice So in act iv, sc 2—

"Therefore I *reed* you three, go hence and within keep close "
Again—

"Well, if ye will be ordered and do by my *reed* "

Again, act v, sc 2—

"And where ye sat, he said full certain, if I would follow his *reed* "
Again, in Erasmus's 'Praise of Folie,' by Chaloner, sig
D 3 . "Vnles perchaunce some would chuse suche a souldiour
as was Demosthenes, who folowynge Archilocus the poetes *rede*,
scarse lookynge his enemies in the face, threw downe his
shelde and ranne awaie, as cowardly a warriour as he was a
wyse oratour "

The old version of the singing Psalms also begins in this
manner—

"The man is blest that hath not bent
To wicked *rede* his ear "

DICCON Godameicy, dame Chat, in faith thou
must the gear begin
It is twenty pound to a goose-turd my Gammer
will not tarry
But hitherward she comes as fast as her legs can carry,
To brawl with you about her cock, for well I heard
Tib say,
The cock was roasted in your house to breakfast
yesterday
And when ye had the carcase eaten, the feather-
ye outflung,
And Doll your maid the legs she had a foot-deep in
the dung
CHAT O gracious God, my heart it buists '
DICCON Well, rule yourself a space
And Gammer Gurton, when she cometh anon into
this place,
Then to the quean let's see tell her your mind, and
spare not
So shall Diccon blameless be, and then go to, I
care not
CHAT Then, whore, beware her throat, I can
abide no longer
In faith, old witch, it shall be seen which of us two
be stronger,
And Diccon, but at your request I would not stay
one hour
DICCON Well keep it in, till she be here, and
then out let it pour
In the meanwhile get you in, and make no worl-
of this,
More of this matter within this hour to hear you
shall not miss
Because I know you are my friend, hide it I could
not doubtless
Ye know your harm, see ye be wise about your own
business

So fare ye well—

CHAT Nay, soft, Diccon, and drink what, Doll,
I say,
Bring here a cup of the best ale, let's see, come
quickly away

THE SECOND ACT

THE THIRD SCENE.

HODGE, DICCON

DICCON Ye see, masters, that one end tapp'd of
this my short device,
Now must we broach t'other too, before the smoke
arise,
And by the time they have a while run,
I trust ye need not crave it,
But look what lieth in both their hearts, ye are like
sure to have it

HODGE Yea, Gog's soul, art alive yet? what
Diccon, dare ich come?

DICCON A man is well hied to trust to thee, I
will say nothing but mum
But, and ye come any nearer, I pray you see all be
sweet

HODGE Tush, man, is Gammer's nee'le found?
that should gladly weet¹

DICCON She may thank thee it is not found,
for if you had kept thy standing,

¹ *ee*, Gladly know So in Shakspeare's "Antony and
Cleopatra," act 1, sc 1—

"In which I bind,
On pain of punishment, the world to *weete*,
We stand up peerless"

The [form] *weet* is also used by Spenser and Fairfax.

The devil he would have fet it out—ev'n, Hodge,
at thy commanding

HODGE Gog's heart¹ and could he tell nothing
where the nee'le might be found?

DICCON Ye foolsh dolt, ye were to seek, ere
we had got our ground,
Therefore his tale so doubtful was, that I could not
perceive it

HODGE Then ich see well something was said,
chope one day yet to have it
But Diccon, Diccon, did not the devil cry, ho, ho,
ho?¹

DICCON If thou hadst tarried where thou
stood'st, thou wouldst hove said so

HODGE Durst swear of a book, cheard him
roar, straight after ich was gone
But tell me, Diccon, what said the knave, let me
hear it anon

DICCON The whoreson talked to me, I know
not well of what
One while his tongue it ran, and paltered² of a cat,

¹ In the ancient moralities, and in many of the earliest entertainments of the stage, the devil is introduced as a character, and it appears to have been customary to bring him before the audience with this cry of *ho, ho, ho*. See particularly the "Devil is an Ass," by Ben Jonson, act 1, sc 1. From the following passages in "Wily Beguiled," 1606, we learn the manner in which the character used to be dressed—"Tush! fear not the dodge I'll rather put on my flashing red nose and my flaming face, and come wrapp'd in a calf's skin, and cry, *ho, ho,*" &c. Again, "I'll put me on my great carnation nose, and wrap me in a rowsing calf's skin suit, and come like some hobgoblin, or some devil ascended from the grisly pit of hell, and like a scarbabe make him take his legs. I'll play the devil, I warrant ye."

² To *palter* is, as Dr Johnson explains it, to *shuffle* with ambiguous expressions. Thus—

Another while he stammered still upon a rat,
 Last of all there was nothing but every word, Chat,
 Chat,
 But this I well'perceived, before I would him rid,
 Between Chat, and the rat, and the cat, the needle
 is hid

Now whether Gib our cat hath eat it in her maw,
 O! Doctor Rat our curate hath found it in the
 straw,

Or this dame Chat your neighbour hath stolen it,
 God he knoweth,

But by the morrow at this time we shall learn how
 the matter goeth

HODGE Canst not learn to-night, man, seest not
 what is here?

[*Pointing behind to his torn breeches*]

DICCON 'Tis not possible to make it sooner ap-
 pear

HODGE Allas, Diccon, then chave no shift, but
 lest ich tarry too long,

[Will] hie me to Sim Glover's shop, there to seek
 for thong,

Therewith this breech to thatch and tie, as ich
 may

DICCON To-morrow, Hodge, if we chance to
 meet, shall see what I will say

"And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd,
 That *palter* with us in a double sense"

—*Macbeth*, act v, sc 8

In confirmation of Dr Johnson's explanation, Mr Steevens
 produces the following instances —

"Now, fortune, frown, and *palter*, if thou please"

—*Marius and Sylla*, 1594

"Romans that have spoke the word,
 And will not *palter*"

—*Englishmen for my Money*, c 3 — O G

THE SECOND ACT

THE FOURTH SCENE

DICCON, GAMMER

DICCON Now this gear must forward go, for
 ' here my Gammer cometh
 Be still a while, and say nothing, make here a little
 romth ¹

GAMMER Good lord! shall never be my luck
 my nee'le again to spy?
 Alas the while, 'tis past my help, where 'tis, still
 it must lie

DICCON Now, Jesus, Gammer Gurton, what
 driveth you to this sadness?
 I fear me, by my conscience, you will sure fall to
 madness

GAMMER Who is that? what Diccon? cham
 lost, man fie, fie

DICCON Mary fie on them that be worthy,
 but what should be your trouble?

GAMMER Alas, the more ich think on it, my
 sorrow it waxeth double
 My goodly tossing ² Spurrier's nee'le ³ chave lost,
 ich wot not where

DICCON Your nee'le! when?

GAMMER My nee'le alas! ich might fullill it, pare,

¹ I suppose he means to say a little *room*, and therefore
 retires till Gammer Gurton has uttered her complaint—S

² I imagine this word was formerly used to signify *charp*
 So in 'The Woman's Prize,' by Beaumont and Fletcher,
 act II, sc 4—

"They heave ye stool on stool, and sling [a] main pot lids
 Like massy rocks dart ladles, tossing irons
 And tongs like thunder-bolts, till overlaid
 They fall beneath the weight"

[Dyce's B and F VII, 140]

³ The ancient spurs were fixed into straps of leather
 Spurriers, of course, would be obliged to use very strong
 needles.—S

As God himself he knoweth, ne'er one beside chave
 DICCON If this be all, good Gammer, I warrant
 you all is safe

GAMMER Why, know you any tidings which
 way my nee'le is gone ?

DICCON Yea, that I do, doubtless, as ye shall
 hear anon,

'A see a thing this matter toucheth within these
 twenty hours,

Even at this gate before my face, by a neighbour
 of yours,

She stooped me down, and up she took up a
 needle or a pin,

I durst be sworn it was even yours, by all my
 mother's kin

GAMMER It was my nee'le, Diccon, ich wot,
 for here even by this post

Ich sat, whattimeasichup start, andso my nee'le ich
 lost

Who was it, leve son ?¹ speak, ich pray thee, and
 quickly tell me that

DICCON A subtle quean as any in this town,
 your neighbour here, dame Chat

GAMMER Dame Chat ! Diccon, let me be gone
 chill thither in post haste

DICCON Take my counsel yet, ere ye go, for
 fear ye walk in waste,

It is a murrain crafty drab, and froward to be
 pleased,

And ye take not the better way, your² needle yet
 ye lose

¹ Who was it, dear son ? So in the ballad-poem of "Adam
 Bell," &c —

"Ye myght have asked towres and towne,
 Parkes and forestes plentie,
 None so pleasaunt to my pay, she said,
 Nor none so *lefe* to me"

[—Hazlitt's *Popular Poetry*, ii 160]

² *Our*, first edition

For when she took it up, even here before your
 doors
 What, soft, dame Chat (quoth I), that same is none
 of yours
 Avaunt (quoth she), sir knave, what pratest thou
 of that I find?
 I would thou hadst kiss'd me I wot where · (she
 meant I know behind)
 And home she went as brag as it had been a
 body-louse,¹
 And I after her, as bold as it had been the good-
 man of the house
 But there, and ye had heard her, how she began to
 scold,
 The tongue it went on patins, by him that Judas
 sold!
 Each other word I was a knave, and you a whore
 of whores,
 Because I spake in your behalf, and said the nee'le
 was yours
 GAMMER Gog's bread! and thinks the callet²
 thus to keep my nee'le me fro?

¹ "As brisk as a body-louse was formerly proverbial"
 See Ray's "Proverbs," 1742, p. 219

² "*Callet*, a lewd woman, a drab" [See Nares, edit
 1859, p. 128] So in the "Supposes," by Geo Gascoigne,
 act v, sc 6 "Come hither, you old *lallat*, you tatling
 huswife that the deuill cut oute your tong"

Again, in Jonson's "Fox," act iv, sc 3—

"Why, the callet

You told me of here I have ta'en disguis'd"

Callett is elsewhere used for stupid, inactive—

"Bid mandlin lay the cloth, take up the meat,
 Look how she stirres, you sullen elfe, you *callett*,
 Is this the haste you make?"

—*Englishmen for my Money*, 1631—O G

See other instances in Dr Grey's "Notes on Shakspeare,"
 vol II, p. 41

DICCON. Let her alone, and she minds none other, but even to dress you so

GAMMER By the mass, chill rather spend the coat that is on my back

Thinks the false quean by such a sleight,¹ that chill my nee'le lack²

DICCON Slip not your gear,² I counsel you, but of this take good heed,
Let not be known, I told you of it, how well soever ye speed

GAMMER Chill in, Diccon, and clean aporn to take, and set before me,
And ich may my nee'le once see, chill sure remember thee.

THE SECOND ACT

THE FIFTH SCENE

DICCON Here will the sport begin, if these two once may meet,
Their cheer, durst lay money, will prove scarcely sweet

My gammer sure intends to be upon her bones
With staves or with clubs, or else with cobble stones³

Dame Chat on the other side, if she be far behind,
I am right far deceived, she is given to it of kind⁴
He that may tairy by it a while, and that but short,
I warrant him trust to it, he shall see all the sport

¹ *Slygh* —First edition

² *Slepe not you gere* —First edition

³ Pebble-stones A *cobble* in the north signifies a *pebble* To *cobble* is to throw stones. See Ray —S.

⁴ By nature.—S.

Into the town will I, my friends to visit there,
 And hither straight again to see the end of this
 gear
 In the meantime, fellows, pipe up your fiddles I
 say, take them,¹
 And let your friends hear such mirth as ye can
 make them

THE THIRD ACT.

THE FIRST SCENE

HODGE Sim Glover, yet gramercy! cham
 meetly well-spiced now,
 Th'art even as good a fellow as ever kissed a cow
 Here is a thong² indeed, by the mass, though ich
 speak it,
 Tom Tankard's great bald curtal,³ I think, could
 not break it
 And when he spied my need to be so straight and
 hard,
 Hase lent me here his nawl to set the gib forward⁴

¹ This passage evidently shows that music playing between the acts was introduced in the earliest of our dramatic entertainments

² [Altered by Dodsley Old edition has *thing*]

³ *Curtal* is a *small horse*, properly one who hath his tail *docked or curtailed*. So, in Dekker's "Villanies discovered by Lanthorne and Candlelight," &c, 1620, sig H "He could shewe more crafty foxes in this wild goose chase, then there are white foxes in Russia, and more strange horse trickes plaide by such riders, then *Bankes his curtal* did ever practise (whose gambals of the two were the *honestest*)"

⁴ A naval phrase The gib is the gib-sail To set a sail, is also the technical term —S

As for my gammer's nee'le the flying fiend go wi'
 it,
 Chill not now go to the door again with it to meet
 Chould make shift good enough, and chad a candle's
 end
 The chief hole in my breech with these two chill
 amend

THE THIRD ACT

THE SECOND SCENE

GAMMER, HODGE

GAMMER How, Hodge! may'st now be glad,
 cha news to tell thee,
 Ich know who hase my nee'le, ich trust soon shall
 it see.

HODGE The devil thou does, hast heard, gam-
 mer, indeed, or dost but jest?

✓ GAMMER 'Tis as true as steel, Hodge

HODGE Why, knowest well where didst lese it?

GAMMER Ich know who found it, and took it
 up shalt see, ere it be long

HODGE God's mother dear, if that be true, fare-
 well both nawl and thong!

But who hase it, gammer, say? one chould fain
 hear it disclosed

GAMMER That false vixen, that same dame Chat,
 that counts herself so honest

HODGE Who told you so?

GAMMER That same did Diccon the bedlam,
 which saw it done.

HODGE Diccon! it is a vengeable knave, gam-
 mer, 'tis a bonable¹ whoreson,

¹ [Abominable.]

Can do mo things than that, els cham deceived evil
By the mass, ich saw him of late call up a great black
devil

O, the knave cried *ho, ho* / he roared and he thundered,

And ye 'ad been here, cham sure you 'ld murrainly
ha' wondered

GAMMER Was not thou afraid, Hodge, to see
him in this place?

HODGE No, and chad come to me, chould have
laid him on the face,

Chould have promised him

GAMMER But, Hodge, had he no horns to push?

HODGE As long as your two arms Saw ye
never Friar Rush

Painted on a cloth with a side-long cow's tail,
And crooked cloven feet, and many a hooked nail?
For all the world (if I should judge) chould reckon
him his brother

Look, even what face Friar Rush¹ had, the devil
had such another

GAMMER. Now, Jesus mercy, Hodge, did Diccon
in him bring?

HODGE Nay, gammer (hear me speak), chill tell
you a greater thing

The devil, when Diccon bad him (ich heard him
wondrous well)

Said plainly (here before us) that dame Chat had
you nee'le

¹ *Friar Rush* is mentioned in Reginald Scot's "Discoverie of Witchcraft," 1584, p. 522. "*Friar Rush* was for all the world such another fellow as this *Hudgun*, and brought up even in the same schoole, to wit, in a kitchen insomuch as the selfsame tale is written of the one as of the other concerning the skullian which is said to have been slaine, &c. For the reading whereof I referre you to *Friar Rush* his storie, or else to John Wierus '*De præstigijs demonum*'"

GAMMER Then let us go, and ask her wherefore
she minds to keep it,
Seeing we know so much, 'twere madness now to
slip it.

HODGE Go to her, gammer, see ye not where
she stands in her doors?
Bid her give you the nee'le, 'tis none of hers, but
yours

THE THIRD ACT

THE THIRD SCENE

GAMMER, CHAT, HODGE

GAMMER Dame Chat, ch'ould play thee fair,
let me have that is mine,
Chill not these twenty years take one fart that is
thine,
Therefore give me mine own, and let me live beside
thee—

CHAT Why art thou crept from home hither to
mine own doors to chide me?
Hence, doating drab, avaunt, or I shall set thee
further
Intends thou and this knave me in my house to
murther?

GAMMER Tush! gape not so on¹ me, woman
shalt not yet eat me,
Nor all the friends thou hast in this shall not en-
treat me,
Mine own goods I will have, and ask thee no²
by'r leave
What, woman, poor folks must have right, though
the thing you aggrieve.

¹ Old copy, *no*

² Old copy, *on*

CHAT Give thee thy right, and hang thee up,
with all thy beggar's brood !
What, wilt thou make me a thief, and say I stole
thy good ?

GAMMER Chill say nothing (ich warrant thee),
but that ich can prove it well,
Thou fet my good even from my door, cham able
this to tell

CHAT Did I (old witch) steal ought was thine ?
how should that thing be known ?

GAMMER Ich cannot tell, but up thou tookest
it, as though it had been thine own

CHAT Mary, fie on thee, thou old gib, with
all my very heart

GAMMER Nay, fie on thee, thou ramp,¹ thou
rig,² with all that take thy part

CHAT A vengeance on those lips that layeth
such things to my charge

GAMMER A vengeance on those callet's hips,
whose conscience is so large

CHAT Come out, hog

GAMMER Come out, hog, and let have me right

CHAT. Thou arrant witch

GAMMER Thou bawdy bitch, chill make thee
curse this night

CHAT A bag and a wallet !³

¹ Gabriel Harvey, in his "Pierces Supererogation," 1593, speaking of Long Meg of Westminster, says "Although she were a lusty, bouncing *rampe*, somewhat like Gallimetta or maid Marian, yet was she not such a roinish rannel, such a dissolute flirt gillian," &c

² Thou strumpet See Note on "Antony and Cleopatra," Shakspeare, 1778, vol viii, p 175 —S

So in Davies's "Scourge of Folly" [1611]—

"Or wanton *Rigg*, or letcher dissolute,
Do stand at Powles Crosse in a sheeten sute"—Reed

³ The accoutrements of an itinerant trull.—S

GAMMER A cart for a callet¹

CHAT Why, weenest¹ thou thus to prevail?
I hold thee a goate,
I shall patch thy coat

GAMMER Thou wert as good kiss my tail,
Thou slut, thou cut,² thou rakes, thou jakes, wilt
not shame make thee hide thee?³

CHAT Thou skald, thou bald, thou rotten,⁴
thou glutton, I will no longer chide thee,
But I will teach thee to keep home

GAMMER. Wilt thou, drunken beast?

HODGE Stick to her, gammer, take her by the
head, chill warrant you this feast
Smite, I say, gammer,
Bite, I say, gammer,

[*They fight*

¹ Thinkest or imaginest

² *Cut* appears to have been an opprobrious term used by the vulgar when they scolded or abused each other. It occurs again, act v, sc 2 "That lying *cut* is lost, that she is not swung and beaten"

A horse is sometimes called *Cut* in our ancient writers, as in the "First Part of Henry IV," act ii, sc 1, and Falstaff says "If I tell thee a lye, spit in my face, and call me *horse*" *Cut* is therefore probably used in the same sense as *horse*, to which it seems to have been synonymous. Several instances of the use of this term are collected by Mr Steevens, in his edition of Shakspeare, see vol. iv, p 202

It appears probable to me that the opprobrious epithet *Cut* arose from the practice of cutting the hair of convicted thieves, which was anciently the custom in England, as appears from the edicts of John de Northampton against adulterers, who thought, with Paulo Migante, that

"England ne'er would thrive,
Till all the whores were burnt alive"

—See Hohnshed, vol 9, 754, Ed 1807 —O G

³ [*Thee* is not in the old copy]

⁴ *ze*, Rat So in one of the Chester Whitsun plays—

"Here is a *rotten*, there a mouse"—S

I trow ye will be keen,
Where be your nails? claw her by the jaws, pull
me out both hei eyen

Gog's bones, gammer, hold up your head

CHAT I trow, drab, I shall dress thee

Tarry, thou knave, I hold thee a goat, I shall
make these hands bless thee

[GURTON] Take thou this, old whore, for
amends, and learn thy tongue well to tame,
And say thou met at this bickering, not thy
fellow,¹ but thy dame

HODGE Where is the strong stewed whore?²
chill gi'r a whore's mark

Stand out one's way, that ich kill none in the dark
Up, gammer, and ye be alive, chill fight³ now for
us both,

Come no near me, thou scald callet, to kill thee
ich were loth

CHAT Art here again, thou hoddypeke?⁴ what,
Doll, bring me out my spit

HODGE Chill broach thee with this, by
m'father's soul, chill conjure that foul
spieet

¹ Not thy equal, but thy mistress.

² *ie*, Rank strumpet from the stews — *S*

³ *Fygh*—First edition

⁴ *ie*, Hodmandod — *S*

I find this word used in Nash's "Anatomie of Absurditie," 1589, sig B, where it seems intended as synonymous to *cuckold* "But women, though want of wisdom, are growne to such wantonnesse, that upon no occasion they will crosse the streete, to have a glaunce of some galliant, deeming that men by one looke of them shoulde be in love with them, and will not stick to make an errant over the way, to purchase a paramour to help at a pinche, who, under hur husbands, that *hoddypoke's* nose, must have all the destilling dew of his delicate rose, leaving him onely a sweet sent, good enough for such a sencelesse sotte"

Let door stand, Cock, why com'st indeed? keep
door, thou whoreson boy

CHAT [*to Doll*] Stand to it, thou dastard, for
thine eais, ise teach the sluttish toy

HODGE Gog's wounds, whoie, chill make thee
avaunt,

Take heed, Cock, pull in the latch

CHAT I' faith, sir loose-breech, had ye tarried,
ye should have found your match

GAMMER Now 'ware thy throat, losel,¹ thou'se
pay for all

HODGE Well said, gammer, by my soul
Hoise her, souse her, bounce her, trounce her, pull
her throat-hole

CHAT Com'st behind me, thou withered witch?
and I get once on foot,
Thou'se pay for all, thou old tar-leather, I'll teach
thee what longs to't

Take thee this to make up thy mouth, till time
thou come by more

HODGE Up, gammer, stand on your feet, where
is the old whore?

¹ A *losel* is a worthless fellow. It is a term of contempt frequently used by Spenser. It is likewise to be met with in the "Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington," 1601.

"To have the losels company"

Again, in "The Pinner of Wakefield," 1599

"Peace, prating losel," &c

See Mr Steevens's "Notes on Shakspeare," vol iv, p 337
Again, in Hall's "Satires," edit 1753, p 78—

"How his enraged ghost would stamp and stare,
That Cæsar's throne is turn'd to Peter chayre,
To see an old shoine *losel* perched high,
Crossing beneath a golden canopy"

See Holinshed's "Chron," edit 1577, vol ii, p 740 ("Five Days' Pastime," p 67), "Englishmen for my Money," p 42, Holinshed, vol v, p 208—O G

Faith, would chad her by the face, chould crack
hei callet crown

GAMMER Ah, Hodge, Hodge, where was thy
help, when th' vixen had me down ¹

HODGE By the mass, Gammer, but for my staff,
Chat had gone nigh to spill you
Ich think the harlot had not cared, and chad not
come, to kill you

But shall we lose our nee'le thus ?

GAMMER No, Hodge, ich were loth to do so
Thinkest thou chill take that at her hand ? no
Hodge, ich tell thee no

HODGE Chould yet this fray were well take up,
and our own nee'le at home,
'Twill be my chance else some to kill, wherever it
be or whom

GAMMER We have a parson (Hodge, thou
knows), a man esteemed wise,
Mast Doctor Rat, chill for him send, and let me
hear his advice
He will her shrive ¹ for all this gear, and give her
penance straight.

Wese have our nee'le, else dame Chat comes ne'er
within heaven-gate

HODGE Yea marry, gammer, that ich think
best will you now for him send ?
The sooner Doctor Rat be here, the sooner wese
ha' an end

And here, gammer, Diccon's devil (as ich remem-
ber well)

Of Cat and Chat, and Doctor Rat, a felomous tale
did tell,

Chold you forty pound, that is the way your nee'le
to get again

¹ Confess

GAMMER Chill ha' him straight, call out the boy, wese make him take the pain

HODGE What, Cock, I say, come out, what devil, can'st not hear?

COCK¹ How now, Hodge, how does gammer? is yet the weather clear?

What would chave me to do?

GAMMER Come hither, Cock, anon

Hence swith to Doctor Rat hie thee, that thou were gone,

And pray him come speak with me, cham not well at ease

Shalt have him at his chamber, or else at Mother Bee's,

Else seek him at Hob Filcher's shop, for, as cheard it reported,

There is the best ale in all the town, and now is most resorted

COCK And shall ich bring him with me, gammer?

GAMMER Yea, by and by, good Cock

COCK² Shalt see that shall be here anon, else let me have on the dock

HODGE Now, gammer, shall we two go in, and tarry for his coming?

What devil, woman, pluck up your heart, and leave off all this glooming³

Though she were stronger at the first, as ich think ye did find her

Yet there ye dress'd the drunken sow, what time ye came behind her⁴

¹ *Gammer* in the first edition

² *Hodge* in the first edition

³ *ie*, Sulky, gloomy looks. It is still said, in vulgar language, that a discontented person looks *glum* — *S*

⁴ This line is given to *Gammer Gurton* in the first edition.

GAMMER Nay, nay, cham suie she lost not all,
foi set them to the beginning,
And ich doubt not, but he will make small boast
of hei winning

THE THIRD ACT

THE FOURTH SCENE

TIB, HODGE, GAMMER, COCK.

TIB See, gammer, gammer, G1b our cat, cham
afraid what she aileth,
She stands me gasping behind the door, as though
her wind her faileth

Now mot¹ ich doubt what G1b should mean, that
now she doth so doat²

HODGE Hold hither, ich hold twenty pound,
your nee'le is in her throat
Grobe her, ich say, methinks ich feel it, does not
prick your hand?

GAMMER Ich can feel nothing

HODGE No! ich know that's not within this
land

A murrainer cat than G1b is, betwixt the Thames
and Tyne,

Sh'ase as much wit in her head almost as ch'ave in
mine

TIB Faith, sh'ase eaten something, that will
not easily down,
Whether she gat it at home, or abroad in the
town,
Ich cannot tell

¹ Old copy, *let*

² That is, appear so mad To doat and to be mad were
used as synonymous terms See Baret's "Avearie," v Dote

GAMMER. Alas ! ich fear it be some crooked
pin,
And then farewell Gib, she is undone and lost, all
save the skin

HODGE. 'Tis ¹ your nee'le, woman, I say , Gog's
soul, give me a knife,
And chill have it out of her maw, or else chall
lose my life

GAMMER What ! nay, Hodge, fie, kill not our
cat, 'tis all the cats we ha' now

HODGE By the mass, dame Chat hase me so
moved, ich care not what I kill, ma' God a vow
Go to then, Tib, to this gear, hold up her tail and
take her,

Chill see what devil is in her guts, chill take the
pains to rake her

GAMMER Rake a cat, Hodge ! what wouldest
thou do ?

HODGE What, think'st that cham not able ?
Did not Tom Tankard rake his curtal t'o'er day
standing in the stable ?

GAMMER Soft, be content, let 's hear what news
Cock bringeth from Master Rat

COCK Gammer, chave been there as you bad,
you wot well about what
'Twill not be long before he come, ich durst swear
off a book,
He bid you see ye be at home, and there for him
to look

GAMMER Where didst thou find him, boy ? was
he not where I told thee ?

COCK Yes, yes, even at Hob Filcher's house, by
him that bought and sold me
A cup of ale had in his hand, and a crab lay in the
fire

¹ Old copy has *Tyb*.

Chad much a-do to go and come, all was so full of
 mire
 And, gammer, one thing I can tell Hob Filcher's
 nawl was lost,
 And Doctor Rat found it again, hard beside the
 door-post
 Ich hold a penny can say something, your nee'le
 again to fet¹
 GAMMER Cham glad to hear so much, Cock,
 then trust he will not let
 To help us herein best he can, therefore, till time
 he come,
 Let us go in, if there be ought to get, thou shalt
 have some

THE FOURTH ACT

THE FIRST SCENE.

DOCTOR RAT, GAMMER GURTON.

DOCTOR RAT. A man were better twenty times
 be a bandog and bark,
 Than here among such a sort be parish priest or
 clerk

¹ Fetched So, in "Cynthia's Revels," act 1, sc 2
 "Nay, the other is better, exceeds it much the invention
 is farther *fet* too"

Again, in Ascham's "Toxophilus," p 15 "And therefore
 agaynst a desperate evill began to seeke for a desperate
 remedie, which was *fet* from Rome, a shop alwayes open to
 any mischief, as you shall perceive in these few leaves, if
 you marke them well"

Again, in Lyly's "Euphues," p 33 "That far *fet* and
 deere bought, is good for ladies."

Where he shall never be at rest one pissing while¹
a day,
But he must trudge about the town this way, and
[then] that way,
Here to a drab, there to a thief, his shoes to tear
and rent,
And that which is worst of all, at every knave's
commandment
I had not sit the space to drink two pots of ale,
But Gammer Gurton's sorry boy was straightway
at my tail,
And she was sick, and I must come, to do I wot
not what
If once her finger's-end but ache : trudge, call for
Doctor Rat
And when I come not at their call, I only thereby
lose,
For I am sure to lack therefore a tithe-pig or a
goose
I warrant you, when truth is known, and told they
have their tale,
The matter whereabout I come is not worth a half-
pennyworth of ale
Yet must I talk so sage and smooth, as though I
were a gloser
But ere the year come at an end, I shall be sure
the loser
What work ye, Gammer Gurton ? know here is your
friend Doctor Rat
GAMMER Ah ! good master Doctor, 'ch a
troubled, 'ch a tioubled you, 'ch wot well that

¹ A proverbial expression used by Ben Jonson in his "Magnetic Lady," and by Shakspeare in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona." See Mr Steevens's Note on the latter, and [Hazlitt's "Proverbs," 1869, p 127] It is also to be found in Nash's "Lenten Stuff," 1599.

DOCTOR RAT How do ye, woman? be ye lusty,
or be ye not well at ease?

GAMMER By Gis,¹ master, cham not sick, but
yet chave a disease

Chad a foul turn now of late, chill tell it you by
gigs

DOCTOR RAT Hath your brown cow cast her
calf, or your sandy sow her pigs?

GAMMER No, but chad been as good they had,
as this, ich wot well

¹ In Shakspeare's "Hamlet," Ophelia sings a song, in
which this adoration is used—

"By gys and by Saint Charity "

And it is also to be found in Gascoigne's Poems, in Preston's
"Cambyses," and in the comedy of "See me and see me
not," 1618—

"By gisse I swear, were I so fairly wed," &c

Mr Steevens's note on "Hamlet," in which Mr Steevens
observes, that *Saint Charity* is a known saint among the
Roman Catholics Spenser mentions her ("Eclog," v,
255) —

"Ah dear Lord and sweet *Saint Charity* !"

Again, in "The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington,"
1601—

"Therefore, sweet master, for *Saint Charity* "

—Note on *Hamlet*, act iv sc 5

[Dr Bailey supposes, which is very probable, that this
abbreviated or corrupt form of *Jesus* arose from] the letters
I H S being anciently all that was set down to denote that
sacred name on altars, the covers of books, &c

It occurs also in the following passage of Erasmus's
"Praise of Folie," by Chaloner, 1549 — 'Like as many
great lordes there be who set so muche by them, as scant
they can eate their meate, or byde a minute without them,
cherishyng them (*by wysse*) a little better than they are
wont to dooe these frounyng philosophers," &c Sig G 2.

Again, in "Euphues and his England," 1582, p 5 —
"Unto whome he replied, shoaring up his eyes, '*by Jes,*
soun, I accompt the cheere good which mainteineth health,
and the servauntes nonest whome I finde thythfull"

DOCTOR RAT. What is the matter?

GAMMER Alas, alas, 'ch a lost my good nee'le
My nee'le, I say, and wot ye what? a drab came
by, and spied it,
And when I asked her for the same, the filth flatly
denied it

DOCTOR RAT What was she that—

GAMMER A dame, ich warrant you she began
to scold and brawl,
Alas, alas, come hither, Hodge, this wretch can tell
you all

THE FOURTH ACT

THE SECOND SCENE

HODGE, DOCTOR RAT, GAMMER, DICCON, CHAT

HODGE Good morrow, Gaffer Vicar

DOCTOR RAT Come on, fellow, let us hear
Thy dame hath said to me, thou knowest of all
this gear?

Let's see what thou canst say

HODGE By m' fay, sir, that ye shall,
What matter soever here was done, ich can tell
your maship

My Gammer Gurton here, see now,

Sat her down at this door, see now,
And as she began to stu her, see now,

Her nee'le fell in the floor, see now,
And while her staff she took, see now,

At Gib her cat to fling, see now,
Her nee'le was lost in the floor, see now,

Is not this a wondrous thing, see now?
Then came the quean dame Chat, see now,

To ask for her black cup, see now
 And even here at this gate, see now,
 She took that nee'le up, see now,
 My gammer then she yede,¹ see now,
 Her nee'le again to bring, see now,
 And was caught by the head, see now,
 Is not this a wondrous thing, see now?
 She tare my gammer's coat, see now,
 And scratched her by the face, see now,
 Chad thought sh'ad stopp'd her throat, see now,
 Is not this a wondrous case, see now?
 When ich saw this, ich was wroth, see now,
 And stert between them twain, see now,
 Else ich durst take a book-oath, see now,
 My gammer had been slain, see now
 GAMMER This is even the whole matter, as
 Hodge has plainly told
 And should fain be quiet for my part, that should
 But help us, good master, beseech ye that ye do,
 Else shall we both be beaten, and lose our nee'le
 too
 DOCTOR RAT What would ye have me to do?
 tell me, that I were gone,
 I will do the best that I can to set you both at one
 But be ye sure dame Chat hath this your nee'le
 found?
 GAMMER Here comes the man, that see her
 take it up off the ground,
 Ask him yourself, Master Rat, if ye believe not me,
 And help me to my nee'le, for God's sake and
 Saint Charity²

¹ i e., *she went*

"For all i-yeede out at one ere,
 That in that othe she did here"

—*Romance of the Rose*

The word is also used by Spenser and Fairfax

² [See a note *supra*]

DOCTOR RAT Come near, Diccon, and let us
hear what thou can express
Wilt thou be sworn, thou seest dame Chat this
woman's nee'le have ?

DICCON Nay, by Saint Benet, will I not, then
might ye think me rave ¹

GAMMER Why did'st not thou tell me so even
here ? canst thou for shame deny it ?

DICCON Ay, marry, gammer but I said I
would not abide by it

DOCTOR RAT Will you say a thing, and not
stick to it to try it ?

DICCON Stick to it, quoth you, Master Rat ?
marry, sir, I defy it ²

Nay, there is many an honest man, when he such
blasts hath blown

In his friend's ears, he would be loth the same by
him were known

If such a toy be used oft among the honesty, ³
It may [not] beseem a simple man of your and my
degree

DOCTOR RAT Then we be never the nearer, for
all that you can tell

DICCON Yes, marry, sir, if ye will do by mine
advice and counsel

If mother Chat see all us here, she [I'll] know how
the matter goes,

Therefore I reed you three go hence, and within
keep close,

And I will into dame Chat's house, and so the
matter use,

That ere ye could go twice to church, I warrant
you hear news

¹ Baret, in his "Alvearie," explains *rave*, "to talke like
a madde bodie "

² I refuse, deny the charge

³ [Among the honest sort ?]

She shall look well about her, but I dunt lay a pledge,

Ye shall of gammer's nee'le have shortly better knowledge

GAMMER Now, gentle Diccon, do so, and, good su, let us trudge

DOCTOR RAT By the mass, I may not tairy so long to be your judge

DICCON 'Tis but a little while, man what, take so much pain,

If I hear no news of it, I will come soon here¹ again

HODGE Tairy so much, good Master Doctor, of your gentleness

DOCTOR RAT Then let us hie inward, and, Diccon, speed thy business

DICCON Now, sus, do you no more, but keep my counsel just,

And Doctor Rat shall thus catch some good, I trust ;
But mothei Chat, my gossip, talk first wthal I must,

For she must be chief captain to lay the Rat in the dust

[*Aside Exit.*
Good even,² dame Chat, in faith, and well-met in this place

CHAT Good even, my friend Diccon, whither walk ye this pace ?

DICCON By my truth, even to you, to learn how the world goeth

Heard ye no more of the other matter, say me now, by your troth ?

CHAT O yes, Diccon hear the old whore and Hodge that great knave

¹ [Original, *sooner*]

² [This should form the commencement of a new scene, but it is not so marked]

But, in faith, I would thou hadst seen O Lord, I
drest them brave
She bare me two or three souses behind in the
nape of the neck,
Till I made her old weasand to answer again keck
And Hodge, that dirty bastard, that at her elbow
stands,
If one pair of legs had not been worth two pair of
hands,
He had had his beard shaven, if my nails would
have served,
And not without a cause, for the knave it well
deserved
DICCON By the mass, I can¹ thee thank, wench,
thou didst so well acquit thee
CHAT And th'adst seen him, Diccon, it would
have made thee beshit thee
For laughter the whoreson dolt at last caught up
a club,
As though he would have slain the master-devil,
Belsabub,
But I set him soon inward
DICCON O Lord! there is the thing,
That Hodge is so offended, that makes him start
and flog
CHAT Why, makes the knave any noiling,² as
ye have seen or heard?
DICCON Even now I saw him last, like a mad
man he far'd,
And sware by heaven and hell, he would a-wreak
his sorrow,
And leave you never a hen alive by eight of the
clock to-morrow

¹ So the edition of 1575 See note, *supra*

² [Ado. See Nares, edit 1859, p 576]

Therefore mark what I say, and my words see that
ye trust,

Your hens be as good as dead, if ye leave them on
the roost

CHAT The knave dare as well go hang himself,
as go upon my ground

DICCON Well, yet take heed, I say, I must tell
you my tale round

Have you not about your house, behind your furnace or lead,

A hole where a crafty knave may creep in for
need?

CHAT Yes, by the mass, a hole broke down
even within these two days

DICCON Hodge, he intends this same night to
slip in thereaways

CHAT O Christ, that I were sure of it! in faith,
he should have his need¹

DICCON Watch well, for the knave will be
there as sure as is your creed,

I would spend myself a shilling to have him
swinged well

CHAT I am as glad as a woman can be of this
thing to hear tell,

By Gog's bones, when he cometh, now that I know
the matter,

He shall sure at the first skip to leap in scalding
water

With a worse turn besides when he will, let him
come

DICCON I tell you as my sister, you know
what meaneth mum

Now lack I but my doctor to play his part
again

[A side

¹ Reward It is a word used by Spenser, Shakspeare, and the chief of our ancient writers.

And lo, where he cometh towards, peradventure
to his pain [Leaves Mother Chat

DOCTOR RAT What good news, Diccon ? fellow,
is mother Chat at home ?

DICCON She is, sir, and she is not, but it please
her to whom

Yet did I take hei taidy, as subtle as she was

DOCTOR RAT The thing that thou went'st for,
hast thou brought it to pass ?

DICCON I have done that I have done, be it
worse, be it better

And dame Chat at hei wits-end I have almost set hei

DOCTOR RAT Why, hast thou spied the nee'le
quickly, I pray thee tell ?

DICCON I have spied it in faith, sir, I handled
myself so well,

And yet the crafty quean had almost take my trump,
But, ere all came to an end, I set her in a dump

DOCTOR RAT How so, I pray thee, Diccon ?

DICCON Marry, sir, will ye hear ?

She was clapp'd down on the backside,¹ by Cock's²
mother dear,

And there she sat sewing a halter or a band,
With no other thing but gammer's needle in hei
hand

As soon as any knock, if the filth be in doubt,
She needs but once puff, and her candle is out.

Now I, su, knowing of every door the pin,
Came nicely, and said no word, till time I was
within,

And there I saw the nee'le, even with these two eyes
Whoever say the contrary, I will swear he lies

DOCTOR RAT O Diccon, that I was not there
then in thy stead !

¹ At the back of her house

² God's, not the boy Cock's.

DICCON Well, if ye will be ordered, and do by my reed,
I will bring you to a place, as the house stands,
Where ye shall take the diab with the nee'le in
hei hands

DOCTOR RAT For God's sake, do so, Diccon,
and I will gage my gown,

To give thee a full pot of the best ale in the town
DICCON Follow me but a little, and mark what
I say,

Lay down your gown beside you, go to, come on
your way

See ye not what is here ? a hole wherem ye may
creep

Into the house, and suddenly unawares among
them leap,

There shall ye find the bitch-fox and the nee'le to-
gether

Do as I bid you, man, come on your ways luther

DOCTOR RAT Art thou sure, Diccon, the swill-
tub stands not hereabout ?

DICCON I was within myself, man, even now,
there is no doubt.

Go softly, make no noise, give me your foot, sir
John,

Here will I wait upon you, till you come out
anon

[*D Rat creeps in.*]

DOCTOR RAT [*calling from within*] Help, Diccon,
out alas, I shall be slain among them.

DICCON If they give you not the needle, tell
them that ye will hang them

Ware that ! how, my wenches, have ye caught the
fox,

That used to make revel among your hens and
cocks ?

Save his life yet for his order, though he sustain
some pain

Gog's bread, I am afraid they will beat out his
brain

DOCTOR RAT Woe worth the hour that I came
here ,

And woe worth him that wrought this gear,

A sort of drabs and queans have me blest,

Was ever creature half so evil drest ?

Whoever it wrought, and first did invent it,

He shall, I warrant him, ere long repent it

I will spend all I have without my skin,

But he shall be brought to the plight I am in ,

Master Baily, I trow, and he be worth his eais,

Will snaffle these murderers, and all that [with]
them bears

I will surely neither bite nor sup,

Till I fetch him hither, this matter to take up

THE FIFTH ACT

THE FIRST SCENE

MASTER BAILY, DOCTOR RAT

BAILY I can perceive none other, I speak it
from my heart,

But either ye are all in the fault, or else in the
greatest part

DOCTOR RAT If it be counted his fault, besides
all his griefs,

When a poor man is spoiled, and beaten among
thieves,

Then I confess my fault herein at this season ,

But I hope you will not judge so much against
reason

BAILY. And methinks by your own tale, of all
that ye name,

If any played the thief, you were the very same
 The women they did nothing, as your words made
 probation,
 But stoutly withstood your forcible invasion
 If that a thief at your window to enter should
 begin,
 Would you hold forth your hand, and help to pull
 him in?
 Or would ¹ you keep him out? I pray you answer
 me

DOCTOR RAT Mairy, keep him out and a good
 cause why

But I am no thief su., but an honest learned clerk
 BAILY Yea, but who knoweth that, when he
 meets you in the dark?

I am sure your learning shines not out at your nose
 Was it any marvel, though the poor woman arose,
 And start up, being afraid of that was in her purse?
 Me-think you may be glad that your ² luck was no
 woise

DOCTOR RAT. Is not this evil enough, I pray
 you, as you think? [*Showing his broken head*]

BAILY Yea, but a man in the dark oft ³ chances
 to wink,

As soon he smites his father as any other man,
 Because, for lack of light, discern him he ne can
 Might it not have been your luck with a spit to
 have been slain?

DOCTOR RAT I think I am little better, my
 scalp is cloven to the brain.

If there be all the remedy, I know who bears the
 knocks ⁴

BAILY By my troth, and well worthy besides
 to kiss the stocks

¹ Orig *you would*

³ [Orig *of*]

² Orig *you*

⁴ Orig *locks*

To come in on the back side, when ye might go about,

I know none such, unless they long to have their brains knock'd out

DOCTOR RAT Well, will you be so good, sir, as talk with dame Chat,

And know what she intended, I ask no more but that

BAILY Let her be called, fellow, because of master doctor,

I warrant in this case, she will be her own proctor

She will tell her own tale, in metre or in prose,

And bid you seek your remedy, and so go wipe your nose

THE FIFTH ACT

THE SECOND SCENE

M BAILY, CHAT, D RAT, GAMMER, HODGE,
DICCON

BAILY Dame Chat, master doctor upon you here complaineth,

That you and your maids should him much disorder,

And taketh many an oath that no word be feigned,
Laying to your charge, how you thought him to murder

And on his part again, that same man say'th fuder,

He never offended you in word nor intent,

To hear you answer hereto, we have now for you sent

CHAT That I would have murdered him ! fie on him, wretch !

And evil mought he the for it, our Lord I beseech
I will swear on all the books that opens and shuts.
He feigneth this tale out of his own guts
For this seven weeks with me, I am sure, he sat
not down,

[To *D Rat*] Nay, ye have other minions in the
other end of the town,

Where ye were liker to catch such a blow
Than anywhere else, as far as I know

BAILY Belike then, master doctor, your ¹ stripe
there ye got not

DOCTOR RAT Think you I am so mad, that
where I was bet, I wot not? ²

Will ye believe this quean, before she hath
tried it?

It is not the first deed she hath done, and after-
ward denied it

CHAT What, man, will you say I broke your
head?

DOCTOR RAT How canst thou prove the
contrary?

CHAT Nay, how provest thou that I did the
deed

DOCTOR RAT Too plainly, by St Mary
This proof, I trow, may serve, though I no word
spoke

[*Showing his broken head*]

CHAT Because thy head is broken, was it I that
broke?

I saw thee, Rat, I tell thee, not once within this
fortnight

DOCTOR RAT No, marry, thou sawest me not,
for why thou hadst no light,

¹ Original, *you*

² [Beaten Here was a note of half a page to explain
and illustrate the meaning of the very common word
wot']

But I felt thee for all the dark, beshrew thy
smooth cheeks !

And thou groped me, this will declare any day
this six weeks [Showing his head

BAILY Answer me to this, Master Rat, when
caught you this harm of yours ?

DOCTOR RAT A while ago, sir, God he know-
eth, within less than these two hours

BAILY Dame Chat, was there none with you
(confess, i' faith) about that season ?

What, woman, let it be what it will, 'tis neither
felony nor treason

CHAT Yes, by my faith, Master Bauly, there was
a knave not far,

Who caught one good filp on the blow with a
door-bar

And well was he worthy, as it seemed to me

But what is that to this man, since this was not he ?

BAILY Who was it, then ? let's hear

DOCTOR RAT Alas, sir, ask you that ?

Is it not made plain enough by the own mouth of
dame Chat ?

The time agreeth, my head is broken, her tongue
cannot lie,

Only upon a bare nay, she saith it was not I

CHAT No, marry, was it not indeed, ye shall
hear by this one thing

This afternoon a friend of mine for good-will gave
me warning

And bad me well look to my roost and all my
capons' pens,

For if I took not better heed, a knave would have
my hens

Then I, to save my goods, took so much pains as
him to watch,

And as good fortune served me, it was my chance
him for to catch

What strokes he bare away, or other what was his
gains,

I wot not, but I am sure he had something for his
pains

BAILY Yet tell'st thou not who it was

CHAT Who it was? A false thief,
That came like a false fox, my pullen¹ to kill and
mischief

BAILY But knowest thou not his name?

CHAT I know it, but what then?
It was that crafty cullion² Hodge, my Gammer
Gurton's man

BAILY Call me the knave hither, he shall sure
kiss the stocks

I shall teach him a lesson for filching hens or cocks

DOCTOR RAT I marvel, Master Baily, so bleared
be your eyes!

¹ Poultry So in Fitzherbert's "Boke of Husbandry"
"Give thy *polcyn*—meate in the morning," &c Again, in
"Your five Gallants," by Middleton "And to see how piti-
fully the *pullen* will looke, it makes me after relent, and
turne my anger into a quick fire to roast them"

² A base, contemptible fellow So, in "Tom Tyler and
his Wife," 1661, p 19—

"It is an old saying praise at the parting,
I think I have made *the cullion* to wring
I was not beaten so black and blew,
But I am sure he has as many new"

In "Wily Beguiled" "But to say the truth, she had little
reason to take a *cullion* lug loaf, milksop slave, when she
may have a lawyer, a gentleman that stands upon his repu-
tation in the country," in Massingers' "Guardian," act
11, sc 4—

"Love live Severino,
And perish all such *cullions* as repine
At his new monarchy"

And Bobadil, in Ben Jonson's "Every Man to his Hum-
our," act 11, sc 5, when beating Cob, exclaims

"You base *cullion*, you"

An egg is not so full of meat, as she is full of
lies

When she hath played this prank, to excuse all
this gear,

She layeth the fault on such a one as I know was
not there

CHAT Was he not there ? look on his pate , that
shall be his witness

DOCTOR RAT I would my head were half so
whole, I would seek no redress

BAILY God bless you, Gammer Gurton

GAMMER God 'eild¹ ye, master mine

BAILY Thou hast a knave within thy house,
Hodge, a servant of thine

They tell me that busy knave is such a filching
one,

That hen, pig, goose, or capon, thy neighbour can
have none

GAMMER By God, cham much a-meved to hear
any such report

Hodge was not wont, ich trow, to have him in that
sort

CHAT A thievisher knave is not on-live, more
filching nor more false ,

Many a truer man than he has hanged up by the
halse²

And thou his dame of all his theft thou art the sole
receiver ,

For Hodge to catch, and thou to keep, I never new
none better

¹ [Original, *Dylde*, the compositor having repeated the *d* of *God* at the beginning of the following word. This is not an uncommon misprint]

² *Hals*, in the Glossary to Douglas's *Æneid*, is thus explained "The hawse, the throat, or neck A-S and Isl *Hals*, collum, thence, *to hals* or *hawse*, to embrace, *collo dare brachia circum*"

GAMMER Sh reverence of your masterdom, and
 you were out a-door,
 Chould be so bold, for all her brags, to call her
 a-riant whore
 And ich knew Hodge as bad as t'ou ich wish me
 endless soirrow,
 And chould not take the pains to hang him up
 before to-morrow

CHAT What have I stolen from thee or thine,
 thou ill-favor'd old tiot?

GAMMER A great deal more (by God's blest)
 than chever by thee got,
 That thou knowest well, I need not say it

BAILY Stop there, I say,
 And tell me here, I pray you, this matter by the
 way
 How chance Hodge is not here? him would I fain
 have had

GAMMER Alas, sir, he'll be here anon, a' be
 handled too bad

CHAT Master Baily, sir, ye be not such a fool,
 well I know,
 But ye perceive by this lingering there is a pad in
 the straw

[*Thinking that Hodge his head was broke, and that
 Gammer would not let him come before them*]

GAMMER Chill show you his face, ich warrant
 thee——lo, now where he is!

BAILY Come on, fellow, it is told me thou art
 a shew,¹ i-wis,
 Thy neigbou's hens thou takest, and plays the
 two-legged fox,

¹The word *shew* at present is wholly confined to the female sex. It here appears to have been equally applied to the male, and signifies *naught* or *wicked*. See Baret's "Alvearie," v *Shewd*

Their chickens and their capons too, and now and
then their cocks

HODGE Ich defy them all that daie it say, cham
as true as the best

BAILY Wert not thou take within this hour in
dame Chat's hens'-nest?

HODGE Take there! no, master, chould not do't
for a house full of gold

CHAT Thou, on the devil in thy coat, swear
this I daie be bold

DOCTOR RAT Swear me no swearing, quean,
the devil he give thee sorrow

All is not worth a gnat, thou canst swear till to-
morrow

Where is the harm he hath? show it, by God's
bread,

Ye beat him with a witness, but the stripes light
on my head

HODGE Beat me! Gog's blessed body, chould
first, ich trow, have burst thee

Ich think, and chad my hands loose, callet, chould
have crust¹ thee

CHAT Thou shitten knave, I trow, thou knowest
the full weight of my fist

I am foully deceived, unless thy head and my
door-bar kissed

HODGE Hold thy chat, whore, thou criest so
loud, can no man else be heard?

CHAT Well, knave, and I had thee alone, I
would surely rap thy costard²

¹ [Crushed]

² The head So, in "Hickscorner"—

"I will rap you on the *costard* with my horn"

—Mr Steevens's Note on *Love's Labour's Lost*, act iii, sc 1

Again, in Ben Jonson's "Tale of a Tub," act ii, sc 2—

"Do you mutter! sir, snorle this way,

That I may hear and answer what you say,

With my school dagger 'bout your *costard*, sir"

BAILY Sir, answer me to this, Is thy head whole
or broken ?

CHAT Yea, Master Baily, blest be every good
token

HODGE Is my head whole ? ich wariant you,
'tis neither scurvy nor scald

What, you foul beast, does think 'tis either pild
or bald ?¹

Nay, ich thank God, chill not for all that thou
may'st spend,

That chad one scab on my naise as broad as
thy finger's end

BAILY Come nearer here

HODGE Yes, that ich dare

BAILY By our lady, here is no harm

Hodge's head is whole enough, for all dame Chat's
chaim

CHAT By Gog's blest,² however the thing he
cloaks or smolders,

I know the blows he bare away either with head
or shoulders

Camest thou not, knave, within this hour, ceeeping
into my pens,

And there was caught within my house, groping
among my hens ?

HODGE A plague both on thy hens and thee !
a cat, whore, a cart !

Oould I were hauged as high as a tree, and ich
were as false as thou art

Give my gammer again her washical¹ thou stole
away in thy lap

GAMMER Yea, Master Baily, there is a thing
you know not on, mayhap

¹ See Note on "King Henry VI," Part I Shakspeare,
1778, vol vi, p 192 —S

² Bliss.

³ A corruption of *what do you call it* —S

This diab she keeps away my good (the devil he
might her snare)

Ich pray you, that ich might have a right action
on hei

CHAT Have I thy good, old filth, or any such
old sow's?

I am as true, I would thou knew, as [the] skm
between thy blows¹

GAMMER Many a truer hath been hanged
though you escape the danger

CHAT Thou shalt answer (by God's pity) for
this thy foul slander

BAILY Why, what can you charge hei withal?
to say so ye do not well

GAMMER Marry, a vengeance to hei heart, the
whole has stol'n my nee'le

CHAT Thy needle, old witch! how so? it were
alms thy soul to knock,

So didst thou say the other day, that I had stol'n
thy cock

And roasted him to my breakfast, which shall not
be forgotten

The devil pull out thy lying tongue, and teeth
that be so rotten

GAMMER Give me my nee'le, as for my cock,
chould be very loth,

That chould here tell he should hang on thy false
faith and troth

BAILY You talk is such, I can scarce learn
who should be most in fault

GAMMER Yet shall ye find no other wight,
save she, by bread and salt

BAILY Keep ye content a while, see that your
tongues ye hold,

¹ A proverbial phrase, used also by Dogberry in 'Much
ado about Nothing' Shakspeare, 1778, vol. II, p. 326—S

Methinks you should remember, this is no place
to scold

How knowest thou, Gammer Gurton, dame Chat
thy needle had ?

GAMMER To name you, sir, the party, chould
not be very glad

BAILY Yea, but we must needs hear it, and
therefore say it boldly

GAMMER Such one as told the tale full soberly
and coldly,

Even he that looked on, will swear on a book,
What time this drunken gossip my fan long nee'le
up took

Diccon (Master) the bedlam, cham very sure ye
know him

BAILY A false knave, by God's pity ! ye were
but a fool to trow him

I durst aventure well the price of my best cap,
That when the end is known, all will turn to a jape ¹
Told he not you that besides she stole your cock
that tide ?

¹ *Jape* is generally used in an obscene sense, as in the Prologue to 'Grim the Collier of Croydon,' and in Skelton's Song in Sir John Hawkins's 'History of Music,' vol iii, p 6. It here signifies a *jest* or *joke*. So in the Prologue to Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," l 705—

"Upon a day he gat him more moneie
Than that the persone gat in monthes tweie
And thus with fained flattering and *japes*,
He made the persone and the pple his apes "

And in "Batman upon Bartholome," 1535, as quoted by Sir John Hawkins, in his "History of Music," vol ii, p 125 "They kepe no counseyll, but they telle all that they here sodenly they laugh, and sodenly they wepe. alwaye they crye, jangle, and *jape*, uneth they ben styлле whyle they slepe "

"Nay, *jape* not with hym, he is no smal fole
It is a solemnpne syre and solayne "

—Skelton's Works, [1843, vol i, p 17]

GAMMER No, master, no indeed, for then he should have lied,

My cock is, I thank Christ, safe and well a-fine

CHAT Yea, but that rugged colt, that whore, that Tib of thine,

Said plainly thy cock was stol'n, and in my house was eaten,

That lying cut is lost, that she is not swinged and beaten

And yet for all my good name it were a small amends,

I pick not this gear (hear'st thou) out of my fingers' ends

But he that heard it told me, who thou of late didst name

Diccon, whom all men knows, it was the very same

BAILY This is the case, you lost your nee'le about the doois,

And she answers again, she hase no cock of yours, Thus in your talk and action, from that you do intend,

She is whole five mile wide from that she doth defend

Will you say she hath your cock?

GAMMER, No, marry, sir, that chull not

BAILY Will you confess her nee'le?

CHAT Will I? no, sir, will I not

BAILY Then there lieth all the matter

GAMMER Soft, master, by the way,

Ye know she could do lttle, and she could not say nay

BAILY Yea, but he that made one lie about your cock-stealing,

Will not stick to make another, what time lies he in dealing

I ween the end will prove this brawl did first arise Upon no other ground but only Diccon's lies

CHAT Though some be lies, as you belike have
espied them .
Yet other some be true, by proof I have well tried
them

BAILY What other thing beside this dame
Chat ?

CHAT Marry, sir, even this,
The tale I told before, the self-same tale it was
his ,
He gave me, like a friend, warning against my
loss,
Else had my hens be stol'n each one, by God's cross
He told me Hodge would come, and in he came
indeed ,

But as the matter chanced, with greater haste than
speed
This truth was said, and true was found, as truly
I report

BAILY If Doctor Rat be not deceived, it was
of another sort

DOCTOR RAT By God's mother, thou and he be
a couple of subtle foxes ,
Between you and Hodge I bear away the boxes
Did not Diccon appoint the place, where thou
should'st stand to meet him ?

CHAT. Yes, by the mass , and, if he came, bad
me not stick to spite him

DOCTOR RAT God's sacrament! the villain
knave hath dress'd us round about ,
He is the cause of all this brawl, that duty shitten
lout,
When Gammer Gurton here complained, and made
a rueful moan,
I heard him swear that you had gotten her needle
that was gone
And this to try, he further said, he was full loth
howbeit

He was content with small ado to bring me where
to see it
And where he sat, he said, full certain, if I would
follow his reed,
Into your house a privy way he would me guide
and lead,
And where ye had it in your hands, sewing about
a clout,
And set me in the back-hole, thereby to find you out
And whiles I sought a quietness, creeping upon
my knees,
I found the weight of your door-bar for my reward
and fees
Such is the luck that some men gets, while they
begin to mell,¹
In setting at one such as were out, minding to
make all well
HODGE Was not well blest, gammer, to 'scape
that scour? And chad been there,
Then chad been dress'd, belike, as ill (by the mass)
as Gaffer Vicar
BAILY. Marry, sir, here is a spoit alone, I
looked for such an end,
If Diccon had not play'd the knave, this had been
soon amend
My gammer here he made a fool, and dress'd her
as she was,
And goodwife Chat he set to scold,² till both parts³
cried, alas!
And Doctor Rat was not behind, whiles Chat his
crown did pare,
I would the knave had been stark blind, if Hodge
had not his share
HODGE Cham meetly well-spced already among's,
cham dress'd like a colt,

¹ i e, To meddle —S ² Old copy, *Scole*. ³ [Parties]

And chad not had the better wit, chad been made
a dolt

BAILY Sir knave, make haste Diccon were
here, fetch him, wherever he be

CHAT Fie on the villain, fie, fie, that makes us
thus agree!

GAMMER Fie on him, knave, with all my heart,
now fie, and fie again!

DOCTOR RAT Now fie on him, may I best say,
whom he hath almost slain

BAILY. Lo, where he cometh at hand, belike he
was not far

Diccon, here be two or three thy company cannot
spare

DICCON God bless you, and you may be bless'd,
so many all at once!

CHAT Come, knave, it were a good deed to geld
thee, by Cock's bones

Seest not thy handiwork? sir Rat, can ye forbear him?

DICCON A vengeance on those hands light, for
my hands came not near him

The whoreson priest hath lift the pot in some of
these alewives' chairs,

That his head would not serve him, belike, to
come down the stairs

BAILY Nay, soft, thou may'st not play the
knave, and have this language too,

If thou thy tongue biddle a while, the better
may'st thou do

Confess the truth as I shall ask, and cease a while
to fable,

And for thy fault, I promise thee, thy handling
shall be reasonable.

Hast thou not made a lie or two, to set these two
by the ears?

DICCON What, if I have? five hundred such
have I seen within these seven years

I am sorry for nothing else, but that I see not the sport,

Which was between them when they met, as they themselves report

BAILY The greatest thing, Master Rat, ye see how he is diess'd

DICCON What devil, need he be groping so deep in goodwife Chat's hens' nest?

BAILY Yea, but it was thy drift to bring him into the briars

DICCON God's bread ! hath not such an old fool wit to save his ears ?

He showeth himself herein, ye see, so very a cox,¹
The cat was not so madly allured by the fox,²

To run in the snares was set for him doubtless,
For he leapt in for mice, and thus sir John for madness

DOCTOR RAT Well, and ye shift no better, ye losel lither³ and lazy,

¹ Minsheu, in his Dictionary, 1627 (as quoted by Mr Tollet, in his "Notes on Shakspeare," vol v p 433, says "Natural ideots and fools have ind still do accustomethem-selves to weare in their cappes cockes feathers, or a hat with a necke and head of a cock on the top," &c From this circumstance Diccon probably calls Di Rat a *cox*, that is, a *coxcomb*, an *idiot*

² See the "History of Reynard the Fox," chap vii, edit 1701—S

³ [Wicked] *Lither* is used sometimes for *weak* or *lumber*, at other times *lean* or *pale* Several examples of the former are collected by Mr Steevens ("Notes on Shakspeare," vol vi, p 263)

Again, in "Euphues and his England," 1582, p 24 "For as they that angle for the tortoys, having once caught him, are driven into such a *lythernesse*, that they loose all their spiritess, being benumbed so," &c Of the latter, the following will seive as a proof (Erasmus's "Praise of Folie," Chaloner's translation, 1549, sig F 2) "Or at lest hyre some younge Phaon for mede to dooe the thyng, still daube theyr *lither* chekes with peintyng," &c

I will go near for this to make ye leap at a daisy¹
In the king's name, Master Bailly, I charge you
set him fast

DICCON What ' fast at cards or fast on sleep?
it is the thing I did last

DOCTOR RAT Nay, fast in fetters, false valet,
according to thy deeds

BAILLY Master Doctor, there is no remedy, I
must entreat you needs
Some other kind of punishment

DOCTOR RAT Nay, by All-Hallows,
His punishment, if I may judge, shall be nought
else but the gallows

BAILLY That were too sore, a spiritual man
to be so extieme¹

DOCTOR RAT Is he worthy any better, sir?
how do you judge and deem?

BAILLY I giant him worthy punishment, but
in no wise so great

GAMMER It is a shaine, ich tell you plain, for
such false knaves entreat
He has almost undone us all, that is as true as
steel

And yet for all this great ado, cham never the
near my nee'le

BAILLY Can'st thou not say anything to that,
Diccon, with least or most?

DICCON Yea, marry, sir, thus much I can say
well, the nee'le is lost

BAILLY Nay, canst not thou tell which way that
needle may be found?

¹ [An appaarent reference to the story told in one of the early jest books of a fellow who was led to execution, and who, when on the gallows, instead of a neck-verse, cried out, "Have at you daisy that grows yonder!" and leapt off the ladder. See "Pasquil's Jests," 1604, repr Hazlitt, p 48]

DICCON No, by my fay, sir, though I might
have an hundred pound

HODGE Thou har lickdish, didst not say the
nee'le would be gotten ?

DICCON No, Hodge, by the same token you
were that time beshutten,

For fear of hobgoblin—you wot well what I mean,
As long as it is since, I fear me yet ye be scarce clean

BAILY Well, Master Rat, you must both learn
and teach us to forgive,
Since Diccon hath confession made, and is so clean
shieve

If ye to me consent to amend this heavy chance,
I will enjoin him here some open kind of penance
Of this condition—where ye know my fee is twenty
pence

For the bloodshed, I am agreed with you here to
dispense,

Ye shall go quit, so that ye grant the matter now
to run,

To end with mirth among us all, even as it was
begun

CHIT Say yea, Master Vicar, and he shall sure
confess to be your debtor,
And all we that be here present will love you much
the better

DOCTOR RAT My part is the worst, but since
you all hereon agree,
Go even to, Master Baily, let it be so for me.

BAILY How say'st thou, Diccon, art content
this shall on me depend ?

DICCON Go to, Master Baily, say on your
mind, I know ye are my friend

BAILY Then mark ye well, to recompense
this thy former action,
Because thou hast offended all, to make them satis-
faction,

Before their faces here kneel down, and as I shall
thee teach,
For thou shalt take an oath of Hodge's leather
breech ,
First for Master Doctor, upon pain of his curse,
Where he will pay for all, thou never draw thy
purse
And when ye meet at one pot, he shall have the
first pull ,
And thou shalt never offer him the cup, but it be
full
To goodwife Chat thou shalt be sworn, even on
the same wise,
If she refuse thy money once, never to offer it twice
Thou shalt be bound by the same here, as thou
dost take it
When thou may'st drink of free cost, thou never
forsake it
For Gammer Gurton's sake, again sworn shalt thou
be,
To help her to her needle again, if it do lie in thee,
And likewise be bound, by the virtue of that,
To be of good a-bearing to Gib her great cat
Last of all for Hodge, the oath to scan,
Thou shalt never take him for fine gentleman
HODGE Come on, fellow Diccon, chall be even
with thee now
BAILY Thou wilt not stick to do this, Diccon,
I trow ?
DICCON No, by my father's skin, my hand down
I lay it ,
Look, as I have promised, I will not denay it ,
But, Hodge, take good heed now, thou do not be-
shit me

[And give him a good blow on the buttock

HODGE Gog's heart, thou false villan, dost thou
bite me ?

BAILY What, Hodge, doth he hurt thee, ere
ever he be begin?

HODGE He thrust me into the buttock with a
bodkin or a pin, [*He discovers the needle*]

I say, gammer, gammer!

GAMMER How now, Hodge, how now!

HODGE God's malt, gammer! Gurton—

GAMMER Thou art mad, ich trow

HODGE Will you see the devil, gammer?

GAMMER The devil, son! God bless us

HODGE Chould, [if] ich were hanged, gammer

GAMMER Marry, see, ye might dross us

HODGE Chave it, by the mass, gammer

GAMMER What, not my nee'le, Hodge?

HODGE Your nee'le, gammer, your nee'le

GAMMER No, fie, dost but dodge

HODGE Ch' a found your nee'le, gammer, here
in my hand be it

GAMMER For all the loves on earth,¹ Hodge, let
me see it

HODGE Soft, gammer

¹ For the love of God, of heaven, or anything sacred, are adjurations frequently used at this day, and appear likewise to have been so at the time this play was written. From the indiscriminate use of them, it became customary on very earnest occasions to request of *all loves*, or *for all the loves on earth*. Of these modes of expression, Mr Steevens hath produced the following examples: "Conjuring his wife of *all loves* to prepare cheer fitting"—"Honest Whore," part 1

"Desire him of *all loves* to come over quickly"

—Plautus's *Menaechmi*, 1595

"I pray thee for *all loves* be thou my mynde sens I am thyne"

—*Accolastus*, 1540

"Mrs Arden desired him of *all loves* to come back againe"—Holinshed's *Chronicle*, p 1064—"Notes on Shakspeare," vol 1, p 279

Again—

"Speak of *all loves*"

—*Midsummer Night's Dream*, act ii, sc 3

GAMMER Good Hodge
HODGE Soft, ich say, taily a while
GAMMER Nay, sweet Hodge, say truth, and not
me beguile
HODGE Cham sure on it, ich warrant you, it
goes no more astiay
GAMMER Hodge, when I speak so fan, wilt still
say me nay?
HODGE Go near the light, gammer, 'tis well in
faith, good luck
Ch' was almost undone, 'twas so far in my buttock
GAMMER 'Tis mine own deal nee'le, Hodge,
sikerly¹ I wot
HODGE Cham I not a good son, gammer, cham
I not?
GAMMER Christ's blessing light on thee, hast
made me for ever
HODGE, Ich knew that ich must find it, else
should a' had it never
CHAT By my troth, gossip Gurton, I am even
as glad,
As though I mine own self as good a turn had
BAILY And I by my conscience, to see it so
come forth,
Rejoice so much at it, as three needles be worth
DOCTOR RAT I am no whit sorry to see you so
rejoice
DICCON Nor I much the gladder for all this noise
Yet say, gramercy, Diccon, for springing of the
game.
GAMMER Gramercy, Diccon, twenty times! O,
how glad cham!

¹ Securely or certainly. So in Chaucer's "Troilus and Cressida," Book III, l. 833—

"The drede of lesing makith him, that he
May in no pafite sikernesse ybe"

If that chould do so much, your masterdom to come
hither,

Master Rat, goodwife Chat, and Diccon together ,
Cha but one halfpenny, as far as ich know it,
And chill not rest this night, till ich bestow it
If ever ye love me, let us go in and drink

BAILY I am content, if the rest think as I
think

Master Rat, it shall be best for you if we so do,
Then shall you warm you and dress yourself too

DICCON Soft, sirs, take us with you, the com-
pany shall be the more ,

As proud comes behind, they say, as any goes be-
fore

But now, my good masters, since we must be gone,
And leave you behind us here all alone

Since at our last ending thus merry we be,
For Gammer Gurton's needle sake, let us have a
plaudite.

FINIS

THE TRIAL OF TREASURE.

EDITION

*A New and Mery Enterlude called the Tball of Treasure,
newly set foorth, and neuer before this tyme imprinted*

THE NAMES OF THE PLAYERS

First, STURDINESS, CONTENTATION, VISITATION, TIME.

The Second, LUST, SAPIENCE, CONSOLATION.

The Third, the PREFACE, JUST, PLEASURE, GREEDY GUT

The Fourth, ELATION, TRUST, a Woman, and
TREASURE, a Woman.

The Fifth, INCLINATION, the Vice

Imprinted at Londõ in Paules Churcheyarde, at the
signe of the Lucrece, by Thomas Purfoote. 1567 4^o
Black letter

MR HALLIWELL'S PREFACE¹

THE interlude, presented to the modern reader for the first time in the following pages, was printed from a copy formerly in the possession of Steevens, the eminent Shakspeanian critic, before it was noticed that a copy in the British Museum contained several variations and superior readings² These were the more important, settling in some places the distribution of the speeches with greater accuracy than they were arranged in the exemplar we used. Perhaps, indeed, this may in some measure have arisen from the one last mentioned having

¹ [To the former edition. Printed for the Percy Society, 1849]

² These have all been adopted in the present reprint. The *variations* exhibited in the Percy Society's text should be rather called mistakes of the transcriber, and two whole lines were omitted]

been what booksellers technically term "cropped," but we have noticed all variations of importance in the notes, and some of them seem incompatible with any supposition, except that there were two different impressions in the same year,¹ or that the Museum copy had been corrected while the work was in the press

Mr Collier conjectures that the "Trial of Treasure" was written some years before it was printed, but subsequently to the composition of "Lusty Juventus," which is, he says, "mentioned in it" But it appears to me that the allusion to "Lusty Juventus" [p 263], is merely a generic proverbial title, and has no reference whatever to the old play so called Mr Collier ("Hist Dram Poet" II., 330), has given a brief analysis of the interlude now reprinted.

December 21, 1849

¹ The Museum copy has a woodcut on the back of the title-page, which is wanting in the other copy, a circumstance which appears to confirm this opinion

THE TRIAL OF TREASURE.



Do all things to edify the Congregation

DIOGENES, which used a barrel for his house
Being fled from his father to the city of Athens,
Comforted himself much in beholding the mouse,
Which desired neither castle nor hold for her
defence,

Concerning sustentation she made no difference,
But ate whatsoever to her did befall,
And, touching her apparel, she had least care of
all,

This poor mouse's property noted Diogenes,
Which oftentimes also he would have in sight,
And though he were disciple unto Antisthenes,
Yet he learned of the mouse as much as he
might,

In the science of 'sophy he had great delight,
But concerning his state and outward condition,
The most can declare, if you make inquisition
On a time he chanced accompanied to be
With Alexander, which stood between him and
the sun.

What requestest thou to have, Diogenes (quod he) ?
Is there any thing that by me may be done ?

I pray thee stand aside, and make a little room
(Quod Diogenes), that the sun upon me may
shine,

Nought else require I of that that is thine
He used to say, that as servants be obedient
To their bodily masters, being in subjection,
Even so evil men, that are not content,
Are subjects and slaves to their lusts and affection,
This lesson unto us may be a direction
Which way our inclination to bridle and subdue,
Namely, if we labour the same to eschew
Thus see you how little this philosopher esteemed
The abundant possessions of this mundane treasure,
Which yet, notwithstanding, at these days is
deemed

To be the original and fountain of pleasure,
This causeth lust to reign without measure,
To the which men are subjects, Diogenes doth
say,

Yet both lust and treasure in time weareth away
A philosopher is he that wisdom doth love,
Which before Pythagoras wise men were named
Now, Diogenes being wise, this doth approve
That some men of this age ought as fools to be
blamed

For where the one with treasure-lack his life
framed,

The other travail, care, and labour with greed-
ness

The same by all means to enjoy and possess
As lust with the lusts converteth to dust,
And leaveth of force his pleasant prosperity,
So treasure in time is turned to rust,
As St James, in his epistle, sheweth the verity,
Hereof we purpose to speak without temerity,
Therefore our matter is named the *Trial of Treasure*,
Which time doth expel with all mundane pleasure.

Both merry and shoit we purpose to be,^{*}
 And therefore require your pardon and patience,
 We trust in our matter nothing you shall see,
 That to the godly may give any offence,
 Though the style be barbarous, not fined with
 eloquence,
 Yet our author desireth your gentle acceptation,
 And we the players likewise with all humiliation

Enter LUST, like a gallant, singing this song.

*Heigho, care away, let the world pass,
 For I am as lusty as ever I was,
 In flowers I flourish as blossoms in May,
 Heigho, care away, heigho, care away !*

LUST What the devil ailed me to sing thus ?
 I cry you mercy, by my faith, for ent'ring
 Most like I have ridden on the flying Pegasus,
 Or in Cock Lorel's barge I have been a vent'ing
 Sing ? why, I would sing, if it were to do again,
 With Orpheus and Amphion I went to school
 What ! lads must be lively attending on the train
 Of Lady Delectation, which is no small fool
 Hey rouse, fill all the pots in the house,
 Tush, man, in good fellowship let us be merry
 Look up like a man, or it is not worth a louse,
 Heigho, troly, hey, dery, dery,
 Ha, pleasant Youth and lusty Juventus,
 In faith, it is good to be merry this May
 For of man's living here there is no point endentus,¹
 Therefore a little mirth is worth much sorrow,
 some say

¹ [Probably for the sake of the rhyme, instead of *entendus*, understood]

Enter JUST

But remember ye not the wise man's sentence ?
It is better in the house of mourning to be
Than in the house of laughter, where folly hath
residence,

For lightness with wisdom cannot agree ,
Though many have pleasure in foolish phantasy,
Ensuing¹ their inclination and lust,
Yet much better is the life of one that is just

LUST Sir, in this you seem against me to inveigh

JUST Nothing but reason, I think, I do say

LUST Marry, you shall have a nightcap for
making the reason

Friend, have you not a piece of stock-fish to sell ?

I would you had a dish of buttered peason

By my faith, your communication likes me well,

But, I beseech you, tell me, is not your name
Just ?

JUST. Yes, forsooth

LUST And my name, thou shalt understand, is
Lust,

And according thereto I am lusty indeed ,

But, I think, thou hast drunk of Morpheus seed

Thou goest like a dromedary, dreamy and drowsy ,

I hold twenty pound the knave is lousy !

JUST. Mine apparel is not like unto thine,

Disguised and jagged, of sundry fashion ;

Howbeit, it is not gold always that doth shine,

But corrupting copper of small valuation ,

Too horrible besides is thy operation,

Nothing more odious unto the just,

Than the beastly desires of inordinate lust.

LUST It is a shameful thing, as Cicero doth
say,

¹ [Following]

That a man his own acts should praise and commend ;

Hypocrites accustom the like, day by day,
Checking other men, when they do offend

JUST Yea, but it is an hard thing, saith the philosopher,

For a foolish man to have his manners reprehended
And even at this day it is come so far,

God grant, for his mercy, it may be amended ¹

For tell a man friendly now of his fault,
Being blasphemy, pride, or vile fornication,
He will be as presumptuous as Haman the halt,
And repay with revenge or else defamation

Thus few men a friendly monition will bear,

But stoutly persist and maintain their ill ;

And in noblemen's houses truly I do fear,

There are too many have such forward will

LUST Wounds and hearts,¹ who can abide this ?

Nay, ye vile villain, I will dress you therefore ,

Your lazy bones I pretend ² so to bless,

That you shall have small lust to prate any more.

JUST Behold the image of incipient fools !

There[re] not a few even now of thy property ,

Until you be put into poverty's schools

Ye will not forsake this foolish insolency.

LUST Nay, soft, with thee I have not made an
end

[*Draw out his sword*]

JUST The just against lust must always contend,

Therefore I propose to wrestle with thee [*put it up*],

Who shall have the victory, straightway we shall see.

LUST When thou wilt, by his flesh, I shall hold the wag

¹ [*i e* , God's wounds and hearts , the orig has *hartes*]

² [*Intend*]

[Wrestle, and let LUST seem to have the better at the first]

JUST I know that Lust useth not little to brag
LUST Thou shalt find me as mighty as Samson
the strong

JUST Yea, the battle of lust endureth long

LUST Wounds and flesh ' I was almost down
on my back ,

But yet I will wrestle, till my bones crack

[Stay, and then speak]

JUST The end of thy presumption now doth
appear

LUST Yet do what thou canst, I will not lie
here ,

No, by his wounds, you old doting knave '

[Cast him, and let him arise again]

Thinkest thou that Lust will be made a slave ?

I shall meet you in Smithfield, or else other-where,
By his flesh and blood, I will thee not forbear '

JUST Not of my power I do thee expel,
But by the might of his sprit that dwelleth in me
Inordinate lust with the just may not dwell,
And therefore may not I accompany thee

LUST Well, goodman Just, it is no matter,
But, in faith, I pretend not with thee to flatter ,
Though from thy company depart I must,
I shall live as much in wealthiness, I trust

[Go out He must drive him out]

JUST Where most wealth is, and most delecta-
tion,

There Lust is commonly of most estimation ,
For whereas wealth wanteth, idleness doth slake,
For where idleness is, Lust parteth the stake

[Pause]

Thus have you seen the conflict of the just,
Which all good men ought to use and frequent ,
For horrible are the fruits of inordinate lust,

Which in some case resembleth Hydra the serpent,
Whose head being cut off, another riseth uncon-
tinent

So, one of Lust's cogitations being cut away,
There riseth up another, yea, many, we may say
It is requisite therefore that every degree
Against this his lust both strive and contend,
And though, at the first, he seem sturdy to be,
The Lord will convince¹ him for you in the end
Your cause unto him therefore wholly commend,
Labouring to avoid all inordinate lust,
And to practice in life to live after the Just

[Go out Enter Inclination, the Vice.

INC I can remember since Noe's ship
Was made, and builded on Salisbury Plain,
The same year the weathercock of Paul's caught
the pip

So that Bow-bell was like much woe to sustaine
I can remember, I am so old,
Since Paradise gates were watched by night,
And when that Vulcanus was made a cuckold,
Among the great gods I appeared in sight
Nay, for all you smiling, I tell you true
No, no, ye will not know me now,
The mighty on the earth I do subdue
Tush, if you will give me leave, I'll tell ye how,
Now, in good faith, I care not greatly,
Although I declare my daily increase,
But then these gentlewomen will be angry,
Therefore I think best to hold my peace
Nay, I beseech you, let the matter stay,
For I would not for twenty pounds come in their
hands,
For if there should chance to be but one Dalila,
By the mass, they would bind me in Samson's bands!

¹ [Conquer]

But what, mean I first with them to begin,
 Seeing that in all men I do remain ?
 Because that first I remained Eve within,
 And after her Adam, and so forth to Cain
 I perceive by your looks my name ye would know ,
 Why, you are not ignorant of that, I dare say ,
 It is I that do guide the bent of your bow,
 And ruleth your actions also day by day ,
 Forsooth, I am called Natural Inclination,
 Which bried in old Adam's fostred bones ,
 So that I am proper to his generation,
 I will not away with casting of stones !
 I make the stoutest to bow and bend
 Again, when I lust, I make men stand upright ,
 From the lowest to the highest I do ascend,
 Drawing them to things of natural might

Enter LUST and STURDINESS, singing this song

*Where is the knave that so dul rave ?
 O, that we could him find,
 We would him make for fear to quake,
 That lout of lobbish kind
 My name is Lust, and let him trust
 That I will have redress,
 For thou and I will make him fly,
 Mine old friend Sturdiness.*

LUST Where is now that valiant Hercules ?
 For all his brags, he is now run away
 STURD (*braggingly*) By the guts of Goliath,
 it is best for his ease,
 For he was like for the pottage to pay
 INC Cock's soul ! what bragging knaves have
 we here ?
 Come ye to convince the mightiest conqueror ?
 It was I, that before you now doth appear,

Which brought to confusion both Hector and
Alexander

Look on this leg, ye prating slaves,
I remember since it was no greater than a tree ,
At that time I had a couple of knaves,
Much like unto you, that waited on me

LUST Cock's precious soul, let us conquer the
knave

STURD By his flesh and sides, a good courage
I have ,
Stand you, therefore, a little aside,
And ye shall see me quickly abate the fool's pride
[*Draw out the sword, make him put it up, and
then strike him Look in your spectacles*

INC Nay, I dare not, I, if thou lookest so big ,
What, should such a boar fight with a pig !
Put up thy sword, man, we will agree ,
So, lo ! do so much as bear that for me

STURD Nay, by his heart then, I will you dress

INC Be good in thine office, gentle friend
Sturdiness ,

For though thou and I do seem to contend,
Yet we are, and must be, friends till the end

STURD Come, give me thy hand, I beshrew
thy heart

INC Nay, you must take all things in good part ,
Who standeth yonder ? Captain Lust ?

STURD Yea, marry

INC No remedy then, to him go I must
You have forgot, I dare say, your old friend In-
clination ,
But let us renew acquaintance again, for Cock's
passion !

LUST Why, man, our acquaintance hath been
of old ,

I am yours at commandment, therefore be bold ;
For Lust can do nothing without Inclination,

Chiefly in matters concerning a pleasant vocation

INC Indeed Lust may be taken for a thing
indifferent,

Except Inclination be joined thereunto ,

But when that I once have revealed my intent,

As I will men to work, so commonly they do

LUST Ye have heard of the combat between me
and Just ?

INC Yea, marry, I heard say that you lay in the
dust

LUST What say ye ?

INC Neither one word nor other, ye may me
trust

Lust Of mine honesty, my company he utterly
refused,

And in wrestling with me he gave me the foil,

Saying that I had myself and other abused,

Leading men in perplexity and marvellous toil

STURD By Gog's wounds, if we had found him
here,

We should, by his flesh, have abated his cheer

INC I perceive, Sturdiness, thou art no fool ,
Tell me of fellowship, where wentest thou to school ?

STURD What, to read or write ?

INC Nay, to swear and fight .

For I think thou canst neither write, read, nor spell ,

But in swearing and fighting thou dost excel

STURD Thou knowest that I am joined with Lust,
And sturdy by nature I am in like case

What, let the world wag all cannot be just,

Some must natural inclination embrace

LUST All men just ? no, I remember the sen-
tence of Tully,

That no man is just that feared death, poverty, or
pain,

Which I do fear all, and that marvellously ;

For fortune is variable, I do perceive plain,

And notwithstanding that Felix possessed great
gain,

Yet when Paul preached of the judgment day
He trembled for fear, and bad him go away

INC Doth such passions often trouble your
mind ?

LUST Nay, not often, but sometime I do them
find ,

But then, to the intent to drive them away,
I either go to sleep, or else to some play

STURD By Gog's precious heart, even so do I ,
But sometime they cumber me pestilently

INC Well, Master Lust, such dumps to eschew,
My advice and request you must needs ensue
That is, to become disciple to doctor Epicurus,
And then you shall have mirth by measure and
overplus ,

Tush, I know a couple companions in store
That were marvellous meet for you evermore ,
I wish you were known, you, unto them

LUST Well, then, call them in

INC Here they come, each of them in a knave's
skin

Enter ELATION and GREEDY-GUT They sing

*With lust to live is our delight,
In high estate and dignity,
Seeing that the Just put us to flight,
Let them alone in misery*

STURD Nay, they be lusty lads, I tell ye

ELA What, Inclination ! methought I did smell
thee

Give me thy hand, ere we further go

INC Now, welcome in faith, and Greedy-gut
also ,

But, sirs, are none of you both acquainted with
Lust?

LUST Yes, that they have been both of them,
I trust,

Welcome, sirs, in faith, welcome unto me

ELA By my troth, I am glad your mastership
to see

In health and prosperity, as presently you be

GRE Bom fay, zo am I wod all my heart

INC This cow-bellied knave doth come from
the cart,

Ise teach you to speak, I hold you a pound!

Curchy, lob, curchy down to the ground

GRE. Che can make curchy well enou'

INC Lower, old knave, or I'll make ye to bow
The great-bellied lout methink cannot bend

Yes, so, lo, he beginneth to amend

LUST Well, sirs, now I remember Æsop's advice,
Which he gave to the Samies¹ against king Croesus,²
Therefore it is good to be witty and wise,
And being in liberty to keep me still thus,
I cannot abide a life that is dolorous,
And seeing that my name is properly Lust,
I hate the conversation of the just

INC Well, Master Lust, first join you to me, In-
clination

Next here with Sturdiness you must you acquaint,
Turn you about, and embrace Elation,
And that wealth may increase without any re-
straint,

Join you with Greedy-gut here in our presence,
That all these in you may have prosperous influence

[Bow to the ground.]

LUST Out, alas! what a sudden passion is this!
I am so taken, that I cannot stand,

¹ [Samians]

² [Original has Crassus]

The cramp, the cramp, hath touched me, i-wis ,
I shall die without remedy now out of hand

GRE By my matins cheese, our master is sick

INC Stand back, Nicol-noddy, with the pudding-
pick,

More brains in thy skin than wit in thy brain,
Such Greedy-gut in faith would be flain !

This cramp doth signify nothing in effect ,
None of all your counsels he will now reject,
And therefore fear not to make full declaration
But how he is bowed by me Inclination

STURD Then fear not the force of these that be
just,

But labour yourself to advance and augment ,
Be jocund and lively, sith your name is Lust,
And then you shall easily obtain your intent

ELA Esteem yourself always equal with the best,
And seek for promotion, power, and dignity ,
It is good when men may live as they lust,
And unto the just bear hate and malignity

GRE O zui, ye must be greedy to catch and to
claw

INC Well said, Greedy-gut, as wise as a daw !

GRE Eat up, at a mouthful, houses and lands

INC There 's a vengeable mouth to—

[*Gape, and the Vice gape*

GRE Never fear God, nor the governor's law,
But gripe, gripe, gripe greedily all that cometh in
your hands

By the mass, but Hugh Howlet is pestilent witty,
What guttish greediness the whoreson can teach !
That thou art not erected, in faith, it is pity,
As high as three trees and a halter will reach

LUST Marry, sirs, but your counsels hath set me
on fire !

Hey, lusty lad, how fresh am I now !

Lead me, Inclination, to have my desire,

And then at thy request I will ever bend and bow
 INC He that bendeth to follow his own inclination,
 Must needs live a wicked and vile conversation,
 But so, Master Lust, I will lead you to a place,
 Where you shall have pleasure enough in short
 space

LUST Yea, but shall not this company go thither?

INC Yes, marry, we four will all go together,
 But Sturdiness shall tarry to face out the matter,
 If Just peradventure against you shall clatter

STURD By the mass, and well said, but first let
 us sing

INC I must tune my pipes first of all by drink-
 ing

ELA Tush, what then? I pray thee help us a
 part

INC Yes, I will sing the treble with all my
 heart.

They sing

*Lust shall be led by Inclination
 To Carnal Cogitation,
 Where Lust is wholly led by me,
 He must fall to cupidity,
 For carnal cares shall him assail,
 And speedily they shall prevail,
 I, Sturdiness, will face it out
 In his cause, sturdy, stiff and stout
 Then Greedy-gut shall make him eat
 Both house and lands like bread and meat,
 Elation shall puff him high
 For to aspire above the sky,
 Then natural and lordly Lust
 Shall with his power despise the Just*

ELA. Our song is ended, hast thou other in store?

INC I shall not have done this half hour and more.

Yet I will, now I remember Come in, Lust ,
That I go before, is but needful and just
You shall be now led by me Inclination
To reason and talk with Carnal Cogitation

STURD Is there more vanity underneath the sun,
Than to be inclined after this sort ?

Well, Lust doth now as other have done,
Yea, and do day by day, esteeming it a sport ,
This Lust is the image of all wicked men,
Which in seeking the world have all delectation ,
They regard not God, nor his commandments ten,
But are wholly led by their own inclination
First, to inculcate with Carnal Cogitation,
And after to the desue of all worldly treasure,
Which alone they esteem the fulness of pleasure
With Elation or Pride he is also associate,
Which puffeth up his senses with presumption
pestilent ,

Then Greedy-gut maketh them continually to grate
On the mock of this world, which he thinketh permanent

I, Sturdiness, to hear out all things am bent
Thus see you how men, that are led by their lust,
Dissent from the virtuous, goodly and just

[*Go out Enter JUST and SAPIENCE*]

SAP The advice of Aristippus have in your mind,
Which willed me to seek such things as be permanent,

And not such as are of a vanishing kind,
For the one with the other is not equivalent
Be circumspect, therefore, foreseeing and sapient,
For treasures here gotten are uncertain and vain,
But treasures of the mind do continually remain

JUST This is the mind of Musonius, also I remember,

Like as presently you have advertised me,
 For the which I cannot but thankfullv render
 Such commendations as is requisite to be ,
 And as your name is Sapience, thus much I see,
 That on heavenly wisdom you do depend,
 And not on as time doth bring to an end

SAP Truth indeed, and therefore, your name
 being Just,

With me and my documents must be associate ,
 Where, contraiy, such as are led by their lust,
 To incline evil are always appropriate
 They have not, as you have, battle and combat
 Against the cogitations that inwardly spring,
 But rather are obedient unto the same thing
 And this is the occasion that men are so ambitious
 And so foolish, led by the lust of their brain
 Sometime to covet, sometime to be vicious ,
 Sometime the counsel of the wise to disdain ,
 Sometime to climb till they fall down again ,
 Sometime to usurp the possessions of other ,
 Sometime to disobey both father and mother

JUST Alas, what availeth it riches to enjoy,
 Though as much in comparison as Croesus the
 king?

What helpeth it to have Helen in Troy,
 If the conscience of man continually sting?
 Elation and Pride no commodity doth bring,
 But is often known the foreiunner of shame,
 And the blot of immortal memory and fame

Enter INCLINATION, the Vice

INC Now, by my halidom, it is alone a
 Better sport in my life I never saw,
 It is trim, I tell you, to dance with John and
 Jone a,
 We pass not a point for God nor his law :

But Lust is lusty, and full of porridge
Cogitation and he in one bed doth lie
When here is Master Just, with his cank'ied cour-
age,

What, and old doting Sapience! then I am dressed, I
So often already Just hath me restrained,
That I dare not entice him any more,
For through Sapience he hath me clearly disdained,
That my courage is spent, and I have no more

[Make as going back]

SAP Nay, soft, sir, we must talk with you, ere
ye go

INC I cannot tarry at this time, the truth is so

JUST Nay, there is no remedy, with you we
must talk

INC By the body of me, I hold best that I walk,
Or else learn to speak language another while,
And so I may happen the knaves to beguile,

JUST Turn back, ere you go, we have somewhat
to say

INC Non point parle françois, non, par ma foy

SAP To deceive us now himself he doth prepare

INC Ick en can ghene english spieken von wael
Body of me, let me go, or else I shall piss
I wis, Master Just, you have loved meere this,
Therefore now be ruled after my counsel,
And godly things for your commodity I shall you
tell

SAP Let him that is just not lightly ensue
His vile inclination and carnal concupiscence,
But let him rather contend the same to subdue,
And chiefly those that have knowledge of Sapience
Therefore to bridle this lust do your diligence,
His crafty provocations utterly to restrain,
That Just may live, while life doth remain.

INC Goodman Hobal, speak you in earnest?
What dost thou say, shall the Just bridle me?

No, no, brother Snaps, do the worst and thy best
I will not be bridled of him nor of thee

JUST Seeing Sapience consisteth in heavenly
document,
And that heavenly document consisteth in Sapience,
To biddle this wretch I cannot but consent,
Sith I of his purpose have had oft intelligence

INC Yet again [to] biddle it doth not prevail,
I will not be bridled of the best of you both
See you this gear ? here's one will make you to
qual,
Stand back ! to kill you, Master Just, I would be
loth !

You have been so burned and fied of late,
That it were pity to hurt you any more
Back, I say, or my dagger shall about your pate,
By the mass, but I will, sir, I'll make you bones
sore

[Struggle two or three times]

JUST I will biddle thee, beast, for all thy brag-
ging

INC In faith, goodman Just, I'll hold ye wag-
ging,
Nay, brother, ye shall find me a cuist colt to biddle,
Nay, in faith, better yet I will make thee to
struggle

SAP Never leave him, but ensue the counsel of
Sapience

JUST Lo, now, I have brought him under obedi-
ence

[Biddle him]

INC Not so obedient as thou thinkest me to
have,

Nay, brother, ye shall find me a coltish knave
We-he-he, it is good for you to hold fast,
For I will kick and winch, while the life doth last

SAP Thou shalt kick indeed, but no victory
win,

Neither to conquer the Just to ungodliness nor sin

INC O yes, O yes, I will make a proclamation
JUST What shall that be ?

INC If ye will give me leave, then you shall see
O yes ' is there any man or woman that hath lost
A gambolling gelding with a grey tail ?
Let him come to the crier, and pay for his cost,
And he will tell him tidings without any fail

SAP To the intent that you may him sharply
restrain,
Let him not enjoy so much of the rem.

[Bridle him shorter]

INC Cock's soul, now the snaffle cutteth my lip,
I would this lubberly knave had the pip !
I shall leap no hedges while this bridle is on,
Out, alas ! I think it will fret me to the bone

SAP Thus should every man, that will be called
Just,

Bridle and subdue his beastly inclination,
That he in the end may obtain perfect trust,
The messenger of God to give sight to salvation

JUST That trust to obtain with him I have
struggled

SAP Then let us depart, and leave this beast
bridled

[Go out both]

INC May the devil go with you and his dun
dame !

Such horse-masters will make a colt quickly tame ,
I would he were hanged that this snaffle did make,
It maketh my chaps so shamefully to ache ,
Ye have no pity on me, you, I see, by your
laughing ,

I care not greatly, if I fall to gambolling ,
We-he-he-he-he, come aloft, I say,
Beware the horse-heels, I advise you stand away ,
The rein of my bridle is tied so short,
That I cannot make you any more sport
But though I be bridled now of the Just,

I doubt not but I shall be unbiddled by Lust,
 And let not Just think but I will rebel,
 Although he bridle me ten times all well,
 Though Nature saith one doom with a croch,
 It will not lie long, but incontinent approach,
 Even so, though that I be biddled a while,
 The colt will at length the couiser beguile

Enter GREEDY-GUT running, and catch a fall

GRE Chill run, I, as fast as I can,
 Zurs, did none of you zee a man?

Cham zent in haste from my Master Lust,
 So that Inclination needs come to him must

INC Where is he now? I pray thee, tell me

GRE Why, what have we here? Jesus, benedicite!
 I hold twenty pound it is Balaam's ass!
 Nay 'tis a colt, I see his tail, by the mass!

INC Am I a colt? nay, thou liest like a knave,
 Somewhat for thy labour now shalt thou have

GRE Hobal, ho, lousy jade, must ye kick?

INC Whoever saw such a desperate Dick?
 Why Greedy-gut, do'st thou not know Inclination?

GRE Body of me, who hath diest thee of that
 fashion?

Thou art biddled for biting now indeed,
 Surah, Master Lust would have thee make
 speed

INC I am bridled, I, even as thou do'st see,
 Therefore desire him to come and help me
 But what is the matter, that he for me sent?

GRE Marry, together with Greediness now he
 is bent,
 He hath had long talk with Carnal Cogitation,
 And is set on fire by the means of Elation,
 So that he is so lusty, he cannot abide,
 Therefore one or other for him must be spied.

INC Well, Greedy-gut, I pray thee, go and make
haste

GRE Tush, fear not, chill spend no time in waste

INC I had rather than forty pence that he were
come,

If I be bridled long, I shall be undone
So sharp is this snaffle, called Restraint,
That it maketh me sweat I am so faint
Hark! I hear the voice of my Master Lust,
Now I shall be unbridled shortly, I trust

Enter LUST

LUST Cock's precious wounds, here hath been
villany

INC Eh, they have used me with too much
villany,

That old knave Sapience so counselled Just,
But let me be unbridled, good Master Lust

[Unbridle him]

LUST Lo, now thou art unbridled, be of good
cheer

INC By'r Lady, I am glad I have gotten thus
clear

But hark you, Master Lust, if I may do you
pleasure,

Whisper, whisper,

LUST She is called Treasure ¹

O, my heart is on fire, till she come in place

INC O Master Lust, she hath an amiable face, ²

A tricker, a trimmer, in faith that she is,
The goddess of wealth, prosperity, and bliss

¹ [In the original the hemistich, *She is called Treasure*, is assigned to Inclination]

² This speech is not assigned to *Inclination* in the original — *Halliwel* (*Additional Notes*)

LUST But think you that this minion long endure shall ?

INC For ever and ever, man, she is immortal
There be many other, but she exceedeth them all

LUST What be they, have you then names in store ?

INC Yea, hark, in your ear [*whispers*], and many other more

LUST Sith that the apple of Paris before me is cast,

And that I may deliver the same where I will,
I would Prometheus were here to help me hold fast,
That I might have a fore-wit with me ever still
Pallas, I consider, in science hath skill,
But Juno and Venus good will do I bear,
Therefore to give the apple I know not where

INC Be counsell'd by me, and give it Lady
Treasure

It shall be for your commodity in the end without measure,

For having the company of this minion lass,
You shall never want the society of Pallas,
Juno, nor yet the armipotent Maids,
Can not resist your strength, be they never so fierce,

And as for Venus, you shall have [*her*] at pleasure,
For she is bought and sold always with Treasure,
She of her power hath whole countries conquered,
The most noble champions by her hath been murdered,

Acon for her sake was stoned to death
Tush, innumerable at this day spend their breath,
Some hang or be hanged, they love her so well,
She is the great goddess, it is true that I tell

LUST Which way should I work of her to have a sight ?

INC I, Inclination, will lead you thither right,

But we must have Greedy-gut and also Elation
 LUST They are at the house of Carnal Cogitation

INC Whither I would wish that we might depart;
 I will lead you thither with all my heart

Enter JUST, TRUST, and CONTENTATION

TRUST, *a woman plainly [apparelled,] and* CONTENTATION *kneel down and sing, she have a crown*

*So happy is the state of those
 That walk upright and just,
 That thou, Lord, dost thy face disclose
 By perfect hope and trust
 Then inclination thou dost stay,
 And sendeth them Sapience,
 That they should serve, and che obey,
 Thy high magnificence
 And sendest Contentation,
 That we in thee may rest
 Therefore all adoration
 To thee pertaineth best*

JUST God careth for his, as the prophet doth say,
 And preserveth them under his merciful wings,
 Namely the just, that his will do obey,
 Observing his holy commandment in all things,
 Not for our sake or for our deservings,
 But for his own sake openly to declare,
 That all men on earth ought to live in his fear
 TRUST How God hath blessed you, all men may see,

For first at your entrance you conquered Lust,
 Not by your power, but by might of the deity,
 As all persons ought to do that be just
 Then through Sapience, which God did you send,

You budled that brutish beast Inclination,
And also ordered you with Contentation

CONT Those that are contented with their voca-
tion

Be thankful to God, this is a true consequent,
And those that be thankful in their conversation,
Cannot but please the Lord God omnipotent,
But those that be sturdy, proud, and disobedient,
The Ruler of all rulers will them confound,
And rot their remembrance off from the ground

JUST When Solon was asked of Cæsus the
king,

What man was most happy in this vale terrestrial,
To the end he seemeth to attribute that thing
When men be associate with treasures celestial,
Before the end can no man judge, he doth say,
That any man is happy that here beareth breath,
But then by his end prettily judge we may
Thus true happiness consisteth, saith he, after death
If this be a truth, as undoubtedly it is,
What men are more foolish, wretched, and miser-
able,

Than those that in these treasures accompt their
whole bliss?

Being infect with ambition, that sickness incurable,
Ah, wicked Adiaſtia, thou goddess deceivable,
Thus to pluck from men the sense of their mind,
So that no contentation therein they can find

TRUST The treasure of this world we may well
compare

To Cneces the witch with her crafty cautility,
Wherewith many men's minds so poisoned are,
That quite they are carried into all fidelity,
They are conjured indeed, and bewitched so sore,
That treasure is their trust, joy and delight
True trust is expelled, they pass not therefore,
And against contentation they continually fight

But though wicked men follow their lust,
Crying, on earth is our felicity and pleasure,
Yet God doth so guide the hearts of the just,
That they respect chiefly the celestial treasure

CONT Alas! should we not have that estimation
Which God hath prepared for his dear elect?
Should not our minds rest in full contentation,
Having trust in this treasure, most high in respect?
St Paul, whom the Lord so high did elect,
Saith It passeth the sense of our memory and
mind,

Much less can our outward eyes the same find.
And as for treasures which men possess here,
Through fickleness of fortune soon fadeth away,
The greatest of renown and most worthy peer
Sometime falleth in the end to misery and decay
Record of Dionysius, a king of much fame,
Of the valiant Alexander and Cæsar the strong
Record of Tarquinius, which Superbus had to name,
And of Helioabalus, that ministered with wrong,
If I should recite all, I should stand very long,
But these be sufficient plainly to approve,
How soon by uncertainty this treasure doth remove

JUST It is true, therefore a mind well content
Is great riches, as the wise King Solomon doth say
We have seen of late days this canker pestilent
Corrupting our realm to our great decay—
Ambition, I mean, which chiefly did reign
Among those that should be examples to others,
We saw how their brethren they did disdain,
And burned with fire the child with the mother,
It is often seen that such monsters ambitious,
As spare not to spill the blood of the innocent,
Will not greatly stick to become seditious,
The determination of God thereby to prevent.
God grant every one of us earnestly to repent,
And not to set our minds on this fading treasure,

But rather wish and will to do the Lord's pleasure
TRUST O ye emperors, potentates, and princes
of renown,
Learn of Just with Trust yourselves to associate
That like as your vocation by right doth ask the
crown,
And also due obedience, being the appointed
magistrate,
So rule that at the last you may be resuscitate,
And reign with the Almighty with perfect con-
tinuance,
Receiving double crowns for your godly governance
Ye noblemen, whom God hath furnished with
fame,
Be mindful to walk in the ways of the Just,
Add virtue evermore to your honourable name,
And be not overcome of concupiscence or lust
Flee from love of treasure, catch hold of me, Trust,
And then double felicity at the last you shall
possess,
And in all earthly doings God shall give you
success
Ye poor men and commons, walk well in your
vocation,
Banish lust and desire, which is not convenient,
Let trust work in you a full contentation,
Considering that it leadeth to treasures more
excellent,
For these are uncertain, but they are most per-
manent
Your necessity supply with virtue and trust,
And then shall you enjoy your crown among the
just
JUST As I, being properly nominate Just,
Am here associate with Contentation,
So have I my whole felicity in Trust,
Who illumineth mine eyes to see my salvation

TRUST Fear ye not, shortly you shall have
 consolation,
 If I were once grown in you to perfection,
 Even thus goeth it always with the children of
 election

JUST I will depart now , will ye go with me,
 Trust?

TRUST Yea, I must always associate the Just

CONT A psalm of thanksgiving first let us sing,
 To the laud and praise of the immortal King

[*Here, if you will, sing "the man is blest
 that feareth God," &c — Go out*

Enter INCLINATION, *laughing*

INC Lust (quod he), now in faith he is lusty,
 Lady Treasure and he hath made a match ,
 He thinketh that I were marvellous trusty,
 Because I teach him to claw and to catch,
 And nowadays amity doth therein consist ,
 He that can flatter shall be well beloved ,
 But he that saith, *thus* and *thus*, saith *Christ*,
 Shall as an enemy be openly reprov'd
 Friendship, yea, friendship consisteth now in adula-
 tion ,

Speak fau and please the lust of thy lord,
 I warrant thee be had in great estimation,
 When those that tell truth shall be abhorr'd
 Ah, unhappy Lingua, whither wilt thou ren?
 Take heed, I advise thee, lest thou be shent,
 If ye chance to tell any tales of these gentlewomen,
 With flesh-hooks and nails you are like to be rent ,
 Nay, for the passion of me be not so moved,
 And I will please you incontinent again
 Above all treasures you are worthy to be loved,
 Because you do no men deride nor disdain ,
 You do not contemn the simple and poor ,

You be not high-minded, proud, and presumptuous,
 Neither wanton nor wily you be nevermore,
 But gentle, loving modesty, and virtuous,
 Behold how a he can please some folks' diet,
 O[1] pacify their minds marvellous well!
 All list, I warrant ye, so they [be] in quiet
 How to please you hereafter now I can tell
 Haik, I hear Lust and my Lady Treasure,
 They are given to solace, singing and pleasure

*Enter LUST and TREASURE, a woman finely
 appareled*

LUST Ah, amorous lady, of beautiful face,
 Thou art heartily welcome into this place,
 My heart is inclined to thee, Lady Treasure,
 My love is insatiate, it keepeth no measure

TREAS It is I, Master Lust, that will you advance,
 Treasure it is that things doth enhance
 Upon me set your whole affection and lust,
 And pass not a point for the ways of the Just
 Treasure is a pleasure, bear that in mind,
 Both trusty and true ye shall me always find

INC As trusty as is a quick eel by the tail!

[*Aside*
 What, Lady Treasure, welcome without fail,
 To be better acquainted with you once I trust,
 But I dare not in the presence of my Master Lust
 [TREAS] Ye are welcome, sir, heartily, what!
 be of good courage,
 Drawer, let us have a pint of white wine and
 borage,

LUST Wherefore, I pray thee tell?

INC Marry, methink you are not well

LUST Not well? who can a better life crave,
 Than to possess such a lady as I have?
 Is there any wealth not contained in Treasure

Ah, lady, I love thee, in faith, out of measure

INC It is out of measure indeed, as you say,
And even so most men love her at this day ,
O, she is a minion of amorous hue,
Hei peer in my days yet I never knew
Old (quod you) I am an old knave, I tell ye,
Nay, never laugh at the matter, for doubtless I
smell ye ,

She passeth Juno, Ceres, and Pallas,
More beautiful than ever dame Venus was,
Othea in sapience she doth exceed,
And Diana in dignity, of whom we do read ,
What should fair Helen once named be,
She excelleth all these, Master Lust, believe me

LUST How say you, is not this an eloquent lad ?

TREAS That you have such a servant, truly I am
glad

INC Ha, ha, now indeed I can you not blame,
For women of all degrees are glad of the same ,
They that flatter and speak them fan,
Shall be their sons, and peradventure their heir

LUST You told me of a brother you had, Lady
Treasure

TREAS Yea, sir, that I have , his name is called
Pleasure ,

And seeing you enjoy me now at your will,
Right soon, I am sure, he will come you until

LUST Truly of him I would fain have a sight,
For because that in pleasure I have marvellous
delight

INC Then honesty and profit you may bid good
night

[*Aside*

LUST What say'st thou ?

INC I say he will shortly appear in sight ,
I know by his singing the same is he,
[*Aside*] The misbegotten Orpheus I think that he
be

Enter PLEASURE, singing this song

*O happy days and pleasant plays,
Wherein I do delight-a,
I do pretend, till my life's end,
To live still in such plight-a*

INC Master Pleasure, I perceive you be of good cheer

PLEAS What, Inclination, old lad, art thou here?

INC Yea, sir, and Lady Treasure your sister, also

PLEAS Body of me, then unto her I will go
What, sister, I am glad to meet with you here

TREAS Welcome unto me, mine own brother dear

Master Lust, this is my brother, of whom I told,
He is pleasant and lusty, as you may behold

LUST Gentleman (I pray you), is your name
Master Pleasure?

PLEAS Yea, sir, and I am brother to Lady Treasure

LUST And are you contented to accompany me?

PLEAS Whereas she is resident, I must needs be,

Treasure doth Pleasure commonly precede¹

But the one is with the other, they have both so decreed

INC Marry, now you are well indeed, Master Lust,

This is better, I trow, than the life of the just

They be compelled to possess contentation,

Having no treasure but trust of salvation

But my lady your mistress—my mistress, I would say,

¹ [Original has *proceed*]

She worketh, you may see, to keep you from decay

LUST O, madam, in you is all my delight,
And in your brother Pleasure, both day and night
The *Trial of Treasure* this is indeed,
I perceive that she is a true friend at need,
For I have proved her, according as Thales doth say,
And I perceive that her beauty cannot decay

TREAS Always with you I will be resident,
So that your life shall be most excellent

PLEAS Yea, sir, and me Pleasure also you shall
have,

So that none other thing there needeth to crave,
I will replenish your heart with delight,
And I will be always with Treasure in sight
But if you desire to enjoy me at your will,
My sister you must have in reputation still,
And then, as her treasure is certain and excellent,
My pleasure shall be both perfect and permanent
Credit not those, sir, that talk that and this,
Saying that in two consisteth no bliss
But let experience your mind ever move,
And see if all men us two do not love

INC [*aside*] Love? yes, they love you indeed,
without a doubt,

Which shutteth some of them God's kingdom with-
out

They love you so well, that their God they do hate,
As time hath declared to us even of late
But he that on such things his study doth cast,
Shall be sure to be deceived at the last

LUST What dost thou say?

INC. Of Treasure, forsooth, ye must ever hold fast,
For if you should chance to lose Lady Treasure,
Then farewell in post this gentleman Pleasure

LUST My love to them both cannot be express'd,
And especially, my lady, you I love best

TREAS. If you love me, as you do profess,

Be sure you shall want no kind of wealthiness

PLEAS And if you have wealthiness at your
own will,

Then will I Pleasure remain with you still

INC [*aside*] You are both as constant as snow
in the sun,

Which from snow to water through melting doth
run,

But worldly-wise men cannot conceive that

To hunt for such mice they learn of the cat

LUST My lady is amorous, and full of favour

INC [*aside*] I may say to you she hath an ill-
favoured savour

LUST What sayest thou?

INC I say she is loving and of gentle behaviour

TREAS And so I will continue still, be you sure

PLEAS And I in like case, while your life doth
endure

LUST Ah trusty Treasure! ah pleasant Plea-
sure!

All wealth I possess now without measure,

And seeing that the same shall firmly remain,

To help me sing a song will you take the pain?

TREAS Even with all my heart, begin when ye
will

INC [*aside*] To it, and I will either help or stand
still

Sing this Song

Am I not in blessed case,

Treasure and Pleasure to possess?

I would not wish no better place,

If I may still have wealthiness:

And to enjoy in perfect peace

My lady, lady

My pleasant pleasure shall increase,

My dear lady.

*Helen may not compared be,
Nor Ciessida that was so bright ,
These cannot stain the shine of thee,
Nor yet Minerva of great might
Thou passest Venus far away,
Lady, lady,
Love thee I will both night and day,
My dear lady*

*My mouse, my nobs, and coney sweet,
My hope and joy, my whole delight ,
Dame Nature may fall at thy feet,
And may yield to thee her crown of right
I will thy body now embrace,
Lady, lady ,
And kiss thy sweet and pleasant face,
My dear lady*

Enter GOD'S VISITATION

VISIT I am God's minister, called Visitation,
Which divers and many ways you may understand ,
Sometime I bring sickness , sometime perturbation ,
Sometime trouble and misery throughout the land ,
Sometime I signify God's wrath to be at hand ,
Sometime a forerunner of destruction imminent,
But an executor of pain I am at this present
Thou insipient fool, that hast followed thy lust,
Disdaining the doctrine declared by Sapience,
In Treasure and Pleasure hath been thy trust,
Which thou thoughtest should remain ever in thy
presence
Thou never rememb'red'st Thales his sentence,
Who willeth men in all things to keep a measure,
Especially in love to uncertainty of treasure ,
Even now I am come from visiting the Just,
Because God beginneth first with his elect ,
But he is so associated and comforted with Trust,

That no kind of impatience his soul can infect
 Contentation in such sort his race doth direct,
 That he is contented with God's operation,
 Comfortably embracing me his Visitation,
 But now I am come to vex thee with pain,
 Which makest Treasure thy castle and rock
 Thou shall know that both she and Pleasure is
 vain,

And that the Almighty thou canst not mock
 Anguish and grief into thee I do cast,
 With pain in thy members continually
 Now thou hast pain, thy pleasure cannot last,
 But I will expel him incontinently

LUST O Cock's heart ! what a pestilence is this !
 Depart from me, I say, hence, God's Visitation !
 Help, help, Lady Treasure, thou goddess of bliss !
 At thy hands let me have some consolation

TREAS I will remain with you, be out of doubt

INC Will ye be packing, you ill-favoured lout ?

VISIT Presently, indeed from him thou shalt
 not go,

And why ? because God's will hath not deter-
 mined so,

But in time thou, Treasure, shalt be turned to rust
 And as for Pleasure he shall now attend on the
 Just

LUST. Gog's wounds ! these pangs increase ever-
 more

INC And my little finger is spitefully sore,
 You will not believe how my heel doth ache

TREAS (to VISITATION). Nay, let me alone,
 your part I will take

(To LUST) Be of good comfort, while I here remain,
 For Pleasure and he shall be parted in twain

VISIT It is not meet that he should be partici-
 pate with Lust,

But rather virtuous, godly and just

LUST Remain with me still, Master Pleasure, I
say

PLEAS Nay, there is no remedy, I must away,
For where God doth punishment and pain,
I Pleasure in no case cannot remain

VISIT I could in like case separate thy treasure,
But God doth admonish thee by losing thy pleasure

[Go out VISITATION and PLEASURE

INC Farewell, in the devil's name, old lousy
lout,

That my master will die I stand in great doubt
Ho, ho, ho, how is it with you, Master Lust?

LUST By the flesh of Goliath, yet Treasure is
my trust,

Though Pleasure be gone, and I live in pain,
I doubt not but Treasure will fetch him again

TREAS Yea, that I will, fear not, and with you
remain

INC The property of rich men undoubtedly he
hath,

Which think with money to pacify God's wrath,
And health at their pleasure to buy and to sell
How is Master Lust, are you anything well?

LUST Against this Visitation my heart doth
rebel

Gog's wounds! shall I still in these pangs remain?

TREAS Fear you not, Master Lust, I will help
you again,

Treasure in physic exceedeth Galenus

Tush! there is no physician but we shall have with
us,

To the ease of your body they will you bring,
And therefore I pray you despair in no thing,
Put your trust always in me Lady Treasure,
And I will restore you again unto Pleasure,
For I am the goddess that therein hath power,
Which shall remain perfect unto the last hour

INC. Yea, yea, Master Lust, be as meriy as you
may ,
Let Treasure be your trust, whosoever say nay

Enter TIME

TIME The ancient Greeks have called me
Chironos,
Which in our vulgar tongue signifieth Time ,
I am ent'ied in presently for a certain purpose—
Even to turn Treasure to rust and to slime,
And Lust, which hath long disdained the Just,
Ensuing his filthy and vile inclination,
Shall immediately be turned to dust,
To the example of all the whole congregation ,
For Time bringeth both these matters to pass,
As experience hath taught in every age,
And you shall behold the same in this glass,
As a document both profitable and sage
Both Lust and Treasure come forth with speed
Into the shop of the most mighty God,
There shall you be beaten to powder indeed,
And for your abusion feel his scourge and rod

INC By Saint Maïy ' then they have made a
wise match,
I pretend therefore to leap over the hatch
Nay, let me depart, sirs , stop me not, I say,
For I must remain, though both these decay

[*Go out*
LUST Lust from the beginning frequented hath
been,
And shall I now turn to nothing for thee ?

TREAS Treasure in all ages hath been beloved,
And shall she from the earth by thee be removed ?

TIME You know that all such things are subject
to time ,
Therefore me to withstand is no reason nor rhyme ,

For like as all things in time their beginning had,
So must all things in time vanish and fade

LUST Gog's wounds, let Treasure remain still
with me

TREAS Yea, let me continue still in my dignity

TIME Nay, I must carry you into Vulcan's fire,
Where you shall be tied unto the uttermost
Seeing Lust against Trust did daily conspire,
To dust he shall turn for all his great boast !

Both of you shall have one rigorous host ,
Come therefore with speed, Time cannot tarry
To the end of your felicity I will you carry

TREAS If there be no remedy, then there is no
shift

LUST He must needs go, that is driven by the
devil's drift ,

Ah ! Cock's precious sides, what fortune is this !
Whither go I now, to misery or bliss ? [Go out

*Enter JUST, leading INCLINATION in his bridle
shackled*

INC We—he, he, he, he ! ware the horse-heels,
I say ,

I would the rein were loose, that I might run
away

JUST Nay, sith thou wilt not spare against me
to rebel,

I will not spare, by God's grace, thee to bridle ,
All men may see how vile Inclination
Spareth not to put the just to vexation ,
Even so may all men learn of me again,
Thy beastly desires to bridle and restrain

INC Marry, sir, I am bridled indeed, as you
say,

And shackled, I think, for running away ,
This snaffle is sharp indeed for the nonce,

And these shackles do chafe my legs to the bones ,
 And yet will I provoke, spurn and pick,
 Rebel, repugn, lash out and kick
 We-he !—

JUST In the jade's name, are ye so flesh
 This gear, I suppose, will pluck down your flesh
 Nay, soft, thou shalt have a little more pain,
 For somewhat shorter now I will tie thy rein

Enter TRUST and CONSOLATION

TRUST Most blessed and happy, I say, are the
 just,
 Even because they restrain their own inclination
 Thou, therefore, that hast made thy treasure of
 trust,

Behold, I have brought thee here Consolation

JUST Now blessed be God of his mercy and
 grace,

With all my heart and soul I do you embrace

CON Consolation is my name, even as Trust
 hath said,

Which is joy or comfort in this life transitory ,
 He that possesseth me is of nothing afraid,
 But hath a most quiet and peaceable memory
 For I, through Trust, doth show thee the glory
 That God hath prepared for them beforehand
 Wherein at the last they shall perfectly stand

TRUST Receive this crown of felicity now at
 this space,

Which shall be made richer at the celestial place

INC By'r lady, I would I had such a gay crown

JUST Now praised be God for this riches of re-
 nown ,

Felicity, in this world, the just doth enjoy

[INC *aside*] Namely, when the devil can them
 not annoy.

[JUST] The Lord's work this is, who be praised
for ever,
Who grant us in his laws still to persever
CON Amen, amen !—God give us delight
In his holy covenant both day and night
TRUST Our matter is almost brought to an end,
Saving that Inclination in prison must be shut
Just, carry him forth, that useth to contend,
And see that surely enough he be put
JUST. That shall be done shortly, by God's grace
INC What, soft, I say, me-think ye go a shame-
ful pace ,
Was there ever poor colt thus handled before ?
Fie upon it, my legs be unreasonably sore ,
Well, yet I will rebel, yea, and rebel again,
And though a thousand times you shouldst me re-
strain [Lead him out

Enter TIME, with a similitude of dust and rust

TIME Behold here, how Lust is converted into
dust ,
This is his image, his wealth and prosperity ,
And Treasure in like case is turned to rust,
Whereof this example showeth the verity.
The *Trial of Treasure* this is, no doubt,
Let all men take heed that trust in the same,
Considering what things I Time bring about,
And quench out the ungodly, then memory and
fame

Enter JUST.

JUST Why, and is Lust and Treasure converted
to this ?

TIME Yea, forsooth

JUST What foolish man in them would put trust,
If this be the final end of their bliss ?
Much better I commend the life of the just

CON So it is, no doubt, for they have consolation,
 Possessing felicity even in this place,
 I mean, through trust and hope of salvation,
 Which setteth out to us God's mercy and grace
 JUST Let all men consider this good erudition,
 And not to put confidence in Lust nor Treasure,
 By these two examples receive admonition,
 And also of the sudden banishment of Pleasure
 TIME Remember that Time turneth all things
 about

Time is the touchstone the just for to try
 But whereas Lust and Treasure in time is come to
 nought,

Just, possessing Trust, remaineth constantly
 So that as I Time have revealed their infamy,
 So have I showed the consolation and gain,
 That the just shall receive that justly do reign

CON We will now no longer trouble this
 audience,
 Sith somewhat tedious to you we have been,
 Beseeching you to bear all things with patience,
 And remember the examples that you have seen
 God grant them to flourish lively and green,
 That some of us the better therefore may be,
 Amen, amen ! I beseech the blessed Trinity

Pray for all Estates

Take heed in time, and note this well,
 Be ruled always by counsel

Learn of the just to lead thy life,
 Being free from envy, wrath, and strife
 Presumption, pride, and covetousness,
 With all other ungodliness

Learn of them always to obey
The Lord's precepts, from day to day,
That thou mayest walk, as he doth will,
And labour thy fond affects to kill

Always subdue thy beastly lust,
And in the Lord put hope and trust ,
Bidle thine inclination
By godly conversation.

The counsel of the wise embrace,
The fool's advice do then deface
Which fast and pray with good delight,
That Adam may be killed quite

That joy in us may still increase,
That God the Lord may give us peace,
That we may be content with Trust
To have our crown among the just

LIKE WILL TO LIKE

EDITIONS

*An Enterlude Intituled Like wil to like quod the Deuel
to the Colur, very godly and ful of pleasant mirth
Wherin is declared not onely what punishment fol-
loweth those that wil rather followe licentious luring,
then to esteeme & followe good councel. and what great
benefits and commodities they receiue that apply them
vnto vertuous luring and good exercises Made by
Vlpran Fulwel Imprinted at Lodon at the long shop
adroyning vnto S Mildreds Churche in the Pultre by
Iohn Allde Anno Domini 1568 4^o Black letter*

*A Pleasant Interlude, &c. London. Printed by Edward
Allde, &c 1587 4^o Black letter.*

A copy of the latter is among Garrick's books at the Museum

Of another production by this writer, not of a dramatic character, an account will be found in Mr Collier's "Bibliographical Catalogue," 1865 "Like will to Like" was Fulwell's only performance in this direction, and is now first reprinted from a copy of the 4to of 1568 in the Malone collection at Oxford Both editions are of the highest rarity.

THE NAMES OF THE PLAYERS

Five may easily play this Interlude

THE PROLOGUE,	} <i>For one</i>	LUCIFER,	} <i>For one</i>
TOM TOSSPOT,		RALPH ROISTER,	
HANKIN HANGMAN,		GOOD FAME,	
TOM COLLIER		SEVERITY	
HANCE,	} <i>For one</i>	PHILIP FLEMING,	} <i>For another</i>
VIRTUOUS LIFF,		PIERCE PICKPURSE,	
GOD'S PROMISE,		HONOUR	
CUTHBERT CUTPURSE		NICHOL NEWFANGLE, <i>the Vice</i>	

THE PROLOGUE

CICERO in his book *De Amicitia* these words
doth express,
Saying nothing is more desirous than like is unto
like,
Whose words are most true and of a certainty
doubtless
For the virtuous do not the virtuous' company
mishke
But the vicious do the virtuous' company eschew
And like will unto like, this is most true
It is not my meaning your ears for to weary,
With hearkenning what is the effect of our matter -
But our pretence¹ is to move you to be merry,
Merrily to speak, meaning no man to flatter
The name of this matter, as I said whilere,
Is, Like will to Like, quoth the Devil to the Collier
Sith pithy proverbs in our English tongue doth
abound,
Our author thought good such a one for to choose,
As may show good example, and mirth may eke
be found,
But no lascivious toys he purposeth for to use
Herein, as it were in a glass, see you may
The advancement of virtue, of vice the decay
To what run ruffians and roisters are brought ;
You may here see of them the final end .

¹ [Intention]

Begging is the best, though that end be nought,
But hanging is wiser, if they do not amend
The virtuous life is brought to honour and dignity
And at the last to everlasting eternity
And because divers men of divers minds be,
Some do matters of mirth and pastime require
Other some are delighted with matters of gravity
To please all men is our author's chief desire
Wherefore mirth with measure to sadness¹ is annexed
Desiring that none here at our matter will be perplexed
Thus, as I said, I will be short and brief,
Because from this dump you shall relieved be
And the Devil with the collier, the thief that seeks the thief,
Shall soon make you merry, so shortly you shall see,
And sith mirth for sadness is a sauce most sweet,
Take mirth then with measure, that best sauceth it

¹ [Seriousness]

LIKE WILL TO LIKE.

[*Here entereth NICHOL NEWFANGLE the Vice, laughing, and hath a knave of clubs in his hand which, as soon as he speaketh, he offereth unto one of the men or boys standing by*

NEW Ha, ha, ha, ha ! now like unto like it will
be none other,
Stoop, gentle knave, and take up your brother
Why, is it so ? and is it even so indeed ?
Why then may I say God send us good speed !
And is every one here so greatly unkind,
That I am no sooner out of sight, but quite out of
mind ?
Marry, this will make a man even weep for woe,
That on such a sudden no man will let me know,
Sith men be so dangerous¹ now at this day
Yet are women kind worms, I dare well say
How say you, woman ? you that stand in the angle,
Were you never acquainted with Nichol Newfangle ?
Then I see Nichol Newfangle is quite forgot,
Yet you will know me anon, I dare jeopard a groat
Nichol Newfangle is my name, do you not me
know ?

¹ [Suspicious]

My whole education to you I shall show
 For first, before I was born, I remember very well,
 That my grandsire and I made a journey into hell,
 Where I was bound prentice before my nativity
 To Lucifer himself, such was my agility
 All kinds of sciences he taught unto me
 That unto the maintenances of pride might best
 agree

I learn'd to make gowns with long sleeves and
 wings

I learn'd to make ruffs like calves' chitterlings,
 Caps, hats, coats, with all kind of apparels,
 And especially breeches as big as good barrels
 Shoes, boots, buskins, with many pretty toys
 All kind of garments for men, women, and boys
 Know you me now? I thought that at the last!
 All acquaintance from Nichol Newfangle is not
 pass'd

Nichol Newfangle was and is, and ever shall be
 And there are but few that are not acquainted
 with me

For so soon as my prenticehood was once come out,
 I went by and by the whole world about

[*Here the DEVIL entereth in, but he speaketh not yet*
Sancte benedicite, whom have we here?

Tom Tumbler, or else some dancing bear?

Body of me, it were best go no near!¹

For ought that I see, it is my godfather Lucifer,
 Whose prentice I have been this many a day
 But no more words but mum you shall hear
 what he will say

[*This name LUCIFER must be written on his*
back and in his breast

LU Ho! mine own boy, I am glad that thou art
 here!

¹ [Nearer.]

NEW He speaketh to you, sir, I pray you come
near *[Pointing to one standing by]*

LU Nay, thou art even he, of whom I am well
apaid

NEW Then speak aloof,¹ for to come nigh I
am afraid

LU Why so, my boy? as though thou diddest
never see me

NEW Yes, godfather, but I am afraid it is now,
as ofttimes it is with thee,

For if my dame and thou hast been tumbling by
the ears,

As oftentimes you do, like a couple of great bears.
Thou carest not whom thou killest in thy raging
mind

Dost thou not remember, since thou didst bruise
me behind?

This hole in thy fury didst thou disclose,
That now may a tent be put in, so big as thy nose
This was, when my dame called thee bottle-nosed
knave,

But I am like to carry the mark to my grave

LU O my good boy, be not afraid,
For no such thing hath happened, as thou hast said
But come to me, my boy, and bless thee I will,
And see that my precepts thou do fulfil

NEW Well, godfather, if you will say ought to
me in this case,
Speak, for in faith I mean not to kneel to that ill
face

If our Lady of Walsingham had no fairer nose and
visage,

By the mass, they were fools that would go to her
on pilgrimage

LU Well, boy, it shall not greatly skill,

¹ [In the old copy, *aloof of*]

Whether thou stand, or whether thou kneel
 Thou knowest what sciences I have thee taught,
 Which are able to bring the world to naught
 For thou knowest that through pride from heaven

I was cast,
 Even unto hell, wherefore see thou make haste
 Such pride through new fashions in men's hearts
 to show

That those, that use it, may have the like over-
 throw

From virtue procure men to set their minds aside,
 And wholly employ it to all sin and pride

Let thy new-fangled fashions bear such a sway,
 That a rascal [may] be so proud as he that best may

NEW Tush, tush, that is already brought to pass,
 For a very skipjack¹ is prouder, I swear by the
 mass,

And seeketh to go more gayer and more brave,
 Than doth a lord, though himself be a knave

LU I can thee thank,² that so well thou hast
 play'd the part,

Such as do so, shall soon feel the smart
 Sith thou hast thus done, there remaineth behind,
 That thou in another thing show thy right kind³

NEW. Then, good godfather, let me hear thy
 mind

LU. Thou knowest I am both proud and arrogant,
 And with the proud I will ever be conversant,
 I cannot abide to see men, that are vicious,
 Accompany themselves with such as be virtuous
 Wherefore my mind is, sith thou thy part canst play,
 That thou adjoin like to like alway

¹ ["A dwarfe, dandiprat, little-skipjacke"—*Cotgrave*]

² [*Can* or *con thee thank*, give thee thanks—a common expression]

³ [Nature]

NEW I never loved that well, I swear by this
day

LU. What, my boy ?

NEW You mind is, sith I fast three meals
every Good Friday,

That I eat nothing but onions and leeks alway

LU Nay, my mind is, sith thou thy part canst
play,

That thou adjoin like to like alway

NEW. Tush, tush, godfather Devil, for that have
thou no care

Thou knowest that like will to like, quoth the
Devil to the Collier

And thou shalt see, that such match I shall make
anon,

That thou shalt say I am thy good-good sweet-
sweet godson

LU I will give thee thanks, when thou hast so
done

Here entereth in the COLLIER

NEW Well, godfather, no mo words but mum !
For yonder comes the Collier, as seemeth me.
By the mass, he will make a good mate for thee

[The DEVIL walketh aside

What, old acquaintance, small remembrance ?

Welcome to town with a very vengeance !

Now welcome, Tom Collier, give me thy hand
As very a knave as any in England.

COLL By mass, god-a-marsy, my vreend Nichol !

NEW By God, and welcome, gentle Tom Lick-
hole !

COLL Cham glad to zee thee merry, my vreend
Nichol

And how dost nowadays, good Nichol ?

NEW And nothing else but even plain Nichol ?

COLL I pray thee, tell me how dost, good
vriend Lick-hole?

NEW It is turn'd from Nichol to Lick-hole
with Tom Collier

I say no more, Tom, but hold thy nose there

COLL Nay, hold thy tongue, Nichol, till my
nose doth come,

So thou shalt take part, and I shall take some

NEW Well, Tom Collier, let these things pass
away,

Tell me what market thou hast made of thy coal
to-day?

COLL To every bushel cha zold but three
peck

Lo, here be the empty zacks on my neck

Cha beguill'd the whoresons, that of me ha' bought,
But to beguile me was their whole thought

NEW But hast thou no conscience in beguiling
thy neighbour?

COLL No, marry, so ich may gain vor my
labour,

It is a common trade nowadays, this is plain,

To cut one another's throat for lucre and gain.

A small van't¹ as the world is now brought to
pass

NEW Thou art a good fellow, I swear by the
mass

As fit a companion for the devil as may be

Lo, godfather Devil, this fellow will match with
thee

[He taketh him by the hand]

LU And good Tom Collier thou art welcome
to me

COLL. God amarsy, good Devil, cham glad of
thy company.

LU. Like will to like, I see very well.

¹ [Fault]

NEW Godfather, wilt thou dance a little, before
thee go home to hell ?

LU I am content, so that Tom Collier do agree

COLL I will never refuse (Devil) to dance with thee

NEW Then, godfather, name what the dance
shall be

LU *Tom Collier of Croydon hath sold his coal*

NEW Why then have at it, by my father's soul !

[NICHOL NEWFANGLE *must have a gutter n or
some other instrument (if it may be),
but if he have not, they must dance about
the place all three, and sing this song
that followeth, which must be done also,
although they have an instrument.*

The Song.

*Tom Collier of Croydon hath sold his coals,
And made his market to-day,
And now he danceth with the Devil,
For like will to like alway*

*Wherefore let us rejoice and sing,
Let us be merry and glad,
Sith that the Collier and the Devil
This match and dance hath made.*

*Now of this dance we make an end
With mirth and eke with joy
The Collier and the Devil will be
Much like to like alway*

NEW Ha, ha ! marry, this is tum singing,
I had not thought the Devil to be so cunning,
And, by the mass, Tom Collier [is] as good as he .
I see that like with like will ever agree

COLL Farewell, Master Devil, vor ich must be
gone [Exit

LU Why, then, farewell my gentle friend Tom

NEW. Farewell, Tom Collier, a knave be thy comfort !

[Exit TOM COLLIER

How sav'st thou, godfather ? is not this tūm sport ?

LU Thou art mine own boy, my blessing thou shalt have

NEW By my truth, godfather, that blessing I do not crave,

But if you go your way, I will do my diligence

As well in your absence as in your presence

LU. But thou shalt salute me, ere I go doubtless,
That in thy doings thou may'st have the better success

Wherefore kneel down and say after me

[He kneeleth down

When the devil will have it so, it must needs so be

NEW What shall I say, bottle-nosed godfather,
canst thou tell ?

LU All hail, O noble prince of hell !

NEW. All my dame's cows' tail[s] fell down in the well

LU I will exalt thee above the clouds

NEW I will salt thee, and hang thee in the shrouds

LU Thou art the enhancer of my renown

NEW Thou art Hance, the hangman of Calatown

LU To thee be honour alone

NEW To thee shall come our hobbling Jone

LU Amen

NEW Amen.

LU Now farewell, my boy, farewell heartily,
Is there never a knave here will keep the Devil company ?

NEW Farewell, godfather, for thou must go alone :

I pray thee come hither again anon [*Exit* LUCIFER
Marry, here was a benediction of the Devil's good
grace

Body of me, I was so afraid, I was like to bestench
the place !

My buttocks made buttons of the new fashion,
While the whoreson Devil was making his saluta-
tion

But, by mass, I am so glad as ever was madge mare,
That the whoreson Devil is joined with the knave
Collier.

As fit a match as ever could be pick'd out,
What sayst thou to it, Jone with the long snout ?

[*TOM TOSSPOT cometh in with a feather in his hat*
But who comes yonder puffing, as hot as a black
pudding

I hold twenty pound it is a ruffian, if a goose go
a-gooding

TOM Gog's heart and his guts, is not this too bad ?
Blood, wounds, and nails ! it will make a man mad

NEW I warrant you, here is a lusty one, [and]
very brave

I think anon he will swear himself a knave.

TOM Many a mile have I ridden, and many a
mile have I gone

Yet can I not find for me a fit companion
Many there be, which my company would frequent,
If to do, as they do, I would be content
They would have me leave off my pride and my
swearing,

My new-fangled fashions, and leave off this wearing
But rather than I such companions will have,
I will see a thousand of them laid in their grave.
Similis similem sibi querit, such a one do I seek,
As unto myself in every condition is like

NEW. Sir, you are welcome, ye seem to be an
honest man,

And I will help you in this matter, as much as I
can,

If you will tarry here a while, I tell you in good
sooth,

I will find one as fit for you as a pudding for a
friar's mouth

TOM I thank you, my friend, for your gentle
offer to me

I pray you tell me, what your name may be

NEW Methink, by your apparel you have had
me in regard,

I pray you, of Nichol Newfangle have you never
heard?

TOM Nichol Newfangle? why, we are of old
acquaintance!

NEW By my troth, your name is quite out of
my remembrance

TOM At your first coming into England, well I
wot,

You were very well acquainted with Tom Tossplot

NEW Tom Tossplot? *Sancti! amen!* how you
were out of my mind!

TOM You know, when you brought into England
this new-fangled kind,

That Tossplots and ruffians with you were first ac-
quainted?

NEW It is even so, Tom Tossplot, as thou hast
said

TOM It is an old saying, that mountains and
hills never meet;

But I see that men shall meet, though they do not
seek,

And, I promise you, more joy in my heart I have
found,

Than if I had gain'd an hundred pound.

NEW. And I am as glad as one had given me a
groat,

That I have met now with thee, Tom Tossput
And seeing that thou wouldst a mate so fain have,
I will join thee with one, that shall be as very a
knave

As thou art thyself, thou may'st believe me .
Thou shalt see anon, what I will do for thee
For you seek for as very a knave, as you yourself
are ,

For, like will to like, quoth the Devil to the Collier

TOM Indeed, Nichol Newfangle, ye say the verity,
For like will to like it will none otherwise be

Enter RALPH ROISTER

Behold, Tom Tossput, even in pudding time ¹
Yonder cometh Ralph Roister, an old friend of
mine !

By the mass, for thee he is so fit a mate,
As Tom and Tib for Kit and Kate,
Now welcome, my friend Ralph Roister, by the
mass

RALPH And I am glad to see thee here in this
place

NEW Bid him welcome hark, he can play a
knave's part

TOM My friend, you are welcome with all my
heart

RALPH God-a-mercy, good fellow, tell me what
thou art

NEW. As very a knave as thou, though the best
be too bad

TOM I am one, which of your company would
be very glad

¹ [A tolerably early example of the use of this saying, which may have taken its rise from the custom of having a pudding as the first dish on the table, and may consequently be equivalent to *betimes*]

RALPH And I will not your company refuse of
a certainty,
So that to my conditions your manners do agree

TOM It should appeal by your sayings, that we
are of one mind,
For I know that roisters and tosspots come of one
kind,

And as our names be much of one accord, and
much like,
So I think our conditions be not far unlike

RALPH If your name to me you will declare and
show,
You may in this matter my mind the sooner know
TOM Few words are best among friends, this is
true,

Wherefore I shall briefly show my name unto you
Tom Tossput it is, it need not to be painted
Wherefore I with Ralph Roister must needs be
acquainted

NEW In faith, Ralph Roister, if thou wilt be
ruled by me,
We will dance hand in hand, like knaves all three
It is as impossible for thee his company to deny,
As it is for a camel to creep through a needle's
eye

Therefore bid him welcome, like a knave as thou
art

RALPH By my troth, Tom Tossput, you are wel-
come with all my heart

TOM. I thank you that my acquaintance ye will
take in good part.
And by my troth, I will be your sworn brother

NEW Tush, like will to like. it will be none
other
For the virtuous will always virtue's company seek
out.

A gentleman never seeketh the company of a lout,

And roisters and ruffians do sober company eschew
For like will ever to like, this is most true

RALPH Now, fiend Tom Tossplot, seeing that
we are brethren sworn,
And neither of our companies from other may be
forborne,

The whole trade of my life to thee I will declare
Tom And to tell you my property also I shall
not spare

NEW Then, my masters, if you will awhile abide
it,
Ye shall see two such knaves so lively described
That, if hell should be raked even by and by in-
deed,

Such another couple cannot be found, I swear by
my creed

Go to, sirs, say on your whole minds,
And I shall paint you out in your right kinds
First, Tom Tossplot, plead thou thy cause and thy
name,

And I will sit in this chair, and give sentence on
the same

I will play the judge, and in this matter give judg-
ment

How say you, my masters, are you not so content ?

RALPH By my troth, for my part, thereto I do
agree

TOM I were to blame, if any fault should be in me

NEW Then that I be in office, neither of you do
grudge ?

BOTH No, indeed

NEW Where learn'd you to stand capp'd before
a judge ?

You souterly ¹ knaves, show you all your manners
at once ?

¹ [Clownish or rude, like a cobbler, from *souter*, a cobbler]
VOL III X

RALPH Why, Nichol, all we are content

NEW And am I plain Nichol? and yet it is in
my arbitrement

To judge which of you two is the vainer knave
I am Master Nichol New tangle, both gay and brave,
For, seeing you make me your judge, I trow,
I shall teach you both your lurpup¹ to know

[*He fighteth*

TOM Stay yourself, sir, I pray you heartily

RALPH I pray you, be content, and we will be
more mannerly

NEW Nay, I cannot put up such an injury,
For, seeing I am in office, I will be known therefore
Fend your heads, sirs, for I will to it more once

[*He fighteth again*

RALPH I pray you be content, good gentle
Master Nichol

TOM I never saw the like, by Gog's soul

NEW Well, my masters, because you do intend
To learn good manners, and your conditions to
amend,

I will have but one fit more, and so make an end

RALPH I pray you, sir, let us no more contend

NEW Marry, this hath breathed me very well
Now let me hear, how your tules ye can tell
And I (master judge) will so bring to pass,
That I will judge who shall be knave of clubs at
Christmas²

TOM. Gog's wounds, I am like Phalaris, that
made a bull of brass—

NEW Thou art like a false knave now, and ever-
more was.

¹ [A word of somewhat uncertain meaning and of obscure origin. See Halliwell *v* *Lurpups*]

² [This is an allusion worth noting, the editor does not recollect to have met with it before]

TOM Nay, I am like Phalaais, that made a bull
of brass,
As a cruel torment for such as did offend,
And he himself first therein put was
Even so are we brought now to this end,
In ordaining him a judge, who will be honoured as
a god,

So for our own tails we have made a rod

RALPH And I am served as Haman, that pre-
par'd—

NEW How was he served, I pray thee, do me tell?

RALPH Who I speak of? thou knowest well.

NEW Thou art served as Harry Hangman,
captain of the black guard

RALPH Nay, I am served as Haman, that prepared
A high pair of gallows for Mordecai the Jew,
And was the first himself that thereon was hanged
So I feel the smart of mine own rod, this is true
But hereafter I will learn to be wise,
And ere I leap once, I will look twice

NEW Well, Tom Tossplot, first let me hear thee
How canst thou prove thyself a verier knave than
he?

TOM You know that Tom Tossplot men do me
call?

NEW A knave thou hast always been, and ever-
more shall

TOM My conditions, I am sure, ye know as well
as I

NEW A knave thou was born, and so thou shalt
die

TOM But that you are a judge, I would say unto
you,

Knaves are Christian men, else you were a Jew

NEW He calls me knave by craft, do you not see?
Sirrah, I will remember it, when you think not on me
Well, say what thou canst for thine own behoof,

If thou provest thyself the verier knave by good
proof,
Thou must be the elder brother, and have the
patrimony,
And when he hath said, then do thou reply
Even Thomas-a-Waterings or Tyburn Hill¹
To the falsest thief of you both, by my father's will !
RALPH I pray you, sir, what is that patrimony ?
NEW I pray you leave your courtesy, and I will
tell you by and by
It be the more knave, the patrimony he must
have,
But thou shalt have it, if thou prove thyself the
verier knave,
A piece of ground it is, that of Beggars' manor
do[th] hold,
And whoso deserves it, shall have it, ye may be
bold—
Call'd Saint Thomas a-Waterings or else Tyburn
Hill,
Given and so bequeathed to the falsest by will
TOM Then I trow I am he, that this patrimony
shall possess,
For I Tom Toss-pot do use this trade doubtless
From morning till night I sit tossing the black
bowl,²
Then come I home, and pray for my father's soul
Saying my prayers with wounds, blood, guts, and
heart
Swearing and staring, thus play I my part
If any poor man have in a whole week earn'd one
groat,
He shall spend it in one hour in tossing the pot

¹ [The two places chiefly used for executions, after the discontinuance of the Elms in Smithfield]

² [The leathern drinking vessel, generally called a *jack*]

I use to call servants and poor men to my company
And make them spend all they have unthriftily,
So that my company they think to be so good,
That in short space their hair grows through their
hood

NEW But will no gossips keep thee company
now and then ?

TOM Tush, I am acquainted with many a woman,
That with me will sit in every house and place,
But then their husbands had need fend their face
For when they come home, they will not be afraid,
To shake the goodman, and sometime shave his
beard

And as for Flemish¹ servants I have such a train,
That will quass and carouse, and therein spend
their gain

From week to week I have all this company,
Wherefore I am worthy to have the patimony

NEW Thus thou may'st be called a knave in
grain,
And where knaves are scant, thou shalt go for
twain

But now, Ralph Roister, let me hear what thou
canst say

RALPH You know that Ralph Roister I am
called alway,
And my conditions in knavery so far doth sur-
mount,

That to have this patimony I make mine account,
For I entice young gentlemen all virtue to eschew,
And to give themselves to riotousness, this is true.
Serving-men also by me are so seduced,
That all in bravery their minds are confused.

¹ [The Flemings or Dutch (for the two seem to have been pretty generally confounded) had a great reputation here, like the Danes afterwards, for habits of excessive drinking]

Then, if they have not themselves to maintain,
To pick and to steal they must be fain
And, I may say to you, I have such a train,
That sometime I pitch a field on Salisbury plain¹
And much more, if need were, I could say verily
Wherefore I am worthy to have the patrimony

NEW He, that shall judge this matter, had
need have more wit than I,
But, seeming you have referred it unto my arbitre-
ment,

In faith I will give such equal judgment,
That both of you shall be well-pleased and content

TOM Nay, I have not done, for I can say much
more

NEW Well, I will not have you contend any
more
But this farm, which to Beggars' manor doth
appertain,

I will equally divide between you twain.

Are you not content, that so it shall be?

BOTH. As it pleaseth you, so shall we agree

NEW Then see, that anon ye come both unto me

RALPH Sir, for my part, I thank you heartily
I promised of late to come unto a company,
Which at Hob Filcher's for me do remain
God be with you, and anon I will come again

TOM Farewell, brother Ralph, I will come to
you anon

[Exit TOM²

NEW Come again, for you shall not so suddenly
be gone

¹ [Salisbury plain was formerly one of the resorts of foot pads, who infested the place in small bodies, and waylaid travellers]

² [The entrances and exits in this piece are so imperfectly marked, that it is often difficult to be sure about them. It seems to be Tom Tossopot who goes out now, but if so, he soon returns, though his re-entry is not recorded]

Here enter eth HANCE with a pot, and singeth as followeth

*See ye not who comes yonder ? an old friend of yours
One that is ready to quass at all hours*

*[He singeth the first two lines, and speaketh
the rest as stammeringly as may be*

*Quass in heart, and quass again, and quass about the
house-a
And toss the black bowl to and fro, and I brinks¹ them
all carouse-a*

Be go-go-gog's nowns, ch-ch-cha drunk zo-zo-much
to-day
That be-be-mass, ch-cham a-most drunk, ich da-da-
dare zay

Chud spe-spe-spend a goo-goo-good groat
Tha-that ich cud vi-vind my ca-ca-captain To-To-
Tom Tossput *[He setteth him in the chair*

NEW Sit down, good Hance, lest thou lie on
the ground,

He knoweth not Tom Tossput, I dare jeopard
twenty pound

TOM² He will know me by and by, I hold you
a clown

How dost thou, servant Hance ? how comes this
to pass ?

HANCE Ma-ma-master To-To-Tom, ch-ch-cham
glad by-by mass— *[He drinketh*

Ca-ca-carouse to-to-to thee, go-go-good Tom

NEW Hold up, good Hance, I will pledge thee
anon

¹ [Drink]

² [Tom seems to have gone out and returned, as observed
above]

RALPH Well, there is no remedy, but I must be gone

HANCE Ta-ta-tairy, good vellow, a wo-wo-word or twain

If tho-tho-thou thyself do-do-do not come again
Bi-bi-bid Philip Flenning co-co-come luther to me,
Vo vo-vor he must lead me home, now ich do ze

RALPH Then, farewell, Hance, I will remember thy errant

He will be here by and by, I dare be his warrant
[Exit RALPH ROISTER

NEW Farewell, Ralph Roister, with all my heart

Come anon, and I will deliver thee thy part

TOM Now, Hance, ight now thou drank'st to me,

Drink again, and I will pledge thee

HANCE *Omni po-po-po-tenti*, all the po-po-pot is empty

NEW Why, Hance, thou hast Latin in thy belly methink

I thought there was no room for Latin, there is so much drink !

HANCE Ich le-le-learned zome La-La-Latin, when ich was a la-la-lad

Ich ca-ca-can zay *Tu es nebulo*, ich learn'd of my dad
And ich could once he-he-help the p-p priest to say mass

By giss, ma-man, ich ha' been cu-cu-cunning, when 'twas

TOM I knew Hance, when he was, as he say'th
For he was once a scholar in good faith,
But through my company he was withdrawn from thence,

Through his riot and excessive expense
Unto this trade, which now you do in him see
So that now he is wholly addicted to follow me,

And one of my guard he is now become

Well, Hance, well, thou wast once a white son ¹

NEW Now, so God help me, thou art a pretty
fellow, Hance,

A clean-legged gentleman, and as proper a paunch,
As any I know between this and France

HANCE Yes, by-by-by God, ich co'd once dance

NEW I speak of no dancing, little-bellied Hance,
But, seeing thou say'st thou canst so well dance,
Let me see where thou canst dance lively

HANCE Tha-tha-that ca-ca-can I do vull trimly
*[He danceth as evil-favoured as may be de-
mised, and in the dancing he falleth
down, and when he riseth, he must groan*

NEW Rise again, Hance, thou hadst almost got
a fall.

But thou dancest trimly, legs and all

Body of me, Hance, how doth thy belly, canst thou
tell?

By the mass, he hath beray'd his breeches, methink
by the smell

TOM I will help thee up, Hance, give me thy
hand *[He riseth*

HANCE By-by mass, ch-ch-chwas almost down,
I think ve-veryly.

NEW Wast thou almost down, Hance? marry,
so think I,

But thou art sick, methink by the groaning

He grunts like a bear, when he is a-moaning

Hark, how his head aches, and how his pulses do
beat

I think he will be hang'd, his belly is so great.

HANCE Go-Go-God-amercy, good Tom, with all
my heart

¹ A term of endearment A commoner form is *white boy*

NEW If thou canst not leap, Hance, let me see
 thee drink a quart,
 And get thee out abroad into the air

TOM Tush, he had more need to sleep in this
 chair

Sit down, Hance, and thou shalt see anon,
 Philip Fleming will come to fetch thee home

[HANCE *sitteth in the chair, and snorteth, as
 though he were fast asleep*

NEW I pray thee, Tom Tossopot, is this one of
 thy men?

TOM He is a companion of mine now and then

NEW By the faith of my body, such carpenter,
 such chips,

And as the wise man said, such lettuce, such lips
 For, like master, like man like tutor, like scholar,
 And, like will to like, quoth the Devil to the Collier

TOM It is no remedy, for it must needs so be,
 Like will to like, you may believe me

[PHILIP FLEMING *enter eth with a pot in his hand*

NEW Lo, where Philip Fleming cometh even in
 pudding time!

TOM He bringeth in his hand either good ale or
 else good wine

PHILIP FLEMING *singeth these four lines
 following.*

*Troll the bowl and drink to me, and troll the bowl
 again,*

*And put a brown toast in [the] pot for Philip Fleming's
 brain*

*And I shall toss it to and fro, even round about the
 house-a*

*Good hostess, now let it be so, I drink them all
 carouse-a*

PHILIP Marry, here is a pot of nippy good ale
 As clear as crystal pure and stale.

Now a crab in the fire were worth a good groat,
That I might quass with my captain Tom Tossopot
What? I can no sooner wish, but by and by I
have!

God save mine eyesight, methink I see a knave
What, captain! how goeth the world with you?
Why, now I see the old proverb to be true,
Like will to like, both with Christian, Turk, and
Jew

Marry, Philip, even as I was wont to do.

PHILIP Ralph Roister told me that I should find
Hance here,

Where is he, that he doth not appear?

NEW I hold twenty pound the knave is blind
Turn about, Philip Fleming, and look behind
Hast thou drunk so much that thy eyes be out?
Lo, how he snoreth like a lazy lout
Go to him, for he sleepeth sound
Two such paunches in all England can scant be
found

PHILIP Why, Hance, art thou in thy prayers
so devoutly?

Awake, man, and we two will quass together
stoutly

HANCE *Domine, dominus noster;*

Me-think ich a spied three knaves on a cluster,

NEW Stay a while, for he sayeth his *pater noster*

HANCE *Sanctum benedictum*, what have I
dreamed?

By Gog's nowns, chad thought ich had been in my
bed

Chad dreamed such a dream, as thou wilt marvel
to hear,

Me-thought I was drowned in a barrel of beer
And by and by the barrel was turned to a ship,
Which me-thought the wind made nicely to skip
And I did sail therein from Flanders to France

At last ich was brought luther among a soyt of
knaves by chance

NEW Lo, Hance, heic is Philip Fleming comenow,
We will go drink together now, how say'st thou ?

HANCE I pray thee, good Vilp, now lead me
away

PHILIP Give me thy hand, and I will thee stay

HANCE How say you, Master Nichol, will you
keep us company ?

NEW Go before, Master Lick-hole,¹ and I will
come by and by

Mates matched together, depart you three ,
I will come after, you may believe me

[*They three are gone together, and NICHOL
NEWFANGLE remaineth behind, but he
must not speak till they be within*]

NEW Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha !

He sings.

*Now three knaves are gone, and I am left alone,
Myself here to solace,
Well done, gentle Jone, why begin you to moan ?
Though they be gone, I am in place*

*And now will I dance, and now will I prance,
For why I have none other work
Snip snap, butter is no bone meat.
Knave's flesh is no pork*

*Hey tisty-tousty, an owl is a bird,
Jackanapes hath an old face,
You may believe me at one bare word,
How like you this merry case ?*

¹ [Nichol had previously addressed the Collier as *Master Lick-hole*, but as the Collier is not on the stage, it is clear that he here applies the same bye-name, *rhythmically caused*, to Hance]

*A piece of ground they think they have found,
I will tell you what it is .
For I them told of Beggars' manor it did hold,
A staff and a wallet was*

*Which in short space, even in this place,
Of me they shall receive
For when that their drift hath spent all their thrift,
Their minds I shall deceive*

*I trow you shall see more knaves come to me,
Which whensoever they do,
They shall have their meed, as they deserve indeed,
As you shall see shortly these two*

*When they do pretend to have had a good end,
Mark well, then, what shall ensue
A bag and a bottle, or else a rope knottle,
This shall they prove too true*

*But mark well this game, I see this gear frame .
Lo, who cometh now in such haste ?
It is Cuthbert Cutpurse
And Pierce Pickpurse,
Give room now a little cast*

*Here entereth CUTHBERT CUTPURSE and PIERCE
PICKPURSE*

[CUTHBERT CUTPURSE must have in his hand a purse of money or counters in it, and a knife in one hand and a whetstone in the other, and PIERCE must have money or counters in his hand and jingle it, as he cometh in]

CUTH By Gog's wounds, it doth me good to the heart,
To see how cleanly I play'd this part
While they stood thrusting together in the throng,

I began to go them among,
 And with this knife, which here you do see,
 I cut away this purse cleanly

NEW See to your purses, my masters, and be
 ruled by me,
 For knaves are abroad, therefore beware
 You are warn'd and ye take not heed, I do not
 care

PIERCE And also, so soon as I had espied
 A woman in the throng, whose purse was fat,
 I took it by the strings, and cleanly it untied
 She knew no more of it than Gib our cat
 Yet at the last she hied apace,
 And said, that the money in my hand she saw
 Thou whore, said I, I will have an action of the case,
 And seeing thou say'st so, I will try the law

CUTHB How say'st thou, Pierce Pickpurse, art
 thou not agreed

These two booties equally to divide?

Then let us count the total sum,

And divide it equally, when we have done

NEW My masters, here is a good fellow, that
 would fain have some

CUTHB What, Nichol Newfangle, be you here?
 So God help me, I am glad with all my heart

PIERCE Then, ere we depart, we will have some
 cheer,

And of this booty you shall have your part

NEW I thank you both even heartily,
 And I will do somewhat for you by and by
 Are not you two sworn brothers in every booty?

BOTH Yes, that we are truly

NEW Then can I tell you news, which you do
 not know

Such news as will make you full glad, I trow.

But first tell me this, Pierce Pickpurse,

Whether is the elder, thou or Cuthbert Cutpurse?

PIERCE In faith, I think we are both of one age
well nigh

CUTHB I suppose there is no great difference
truly

But wherefore ask you ? I pray you, tell me why ?

NEW I will tell you the cause without any
delay

For a piece of land is fallen, as I hear say,
Which by succession must come to one of you

A proper plot it is, this is most true

For thou, Cuthbert Cutpurse, was Cuthbert Cut-
throat's son,

And thou, Pierce Pickpurse, by that time thou hast
done,

Canst derive thy pedigree from an ancient house
Thy father was Tom Thief, and thy mother was
Tib Louse

This piece of land, whereto you inheritors are,
Is called the land of the two-legged mare,¹

In which piece of ground there is a mare indeed,
Which is the quickest mare in England for speed
Therefore, if you will come anon unto me,

I will put you in possession and that you shall see

CUTHB I cannot believe that such luck is
happen'd to us

NEW It is true, that I to you do discuss.

PIERCE If you will help us to this piece of
ground,

Both of us to you shall think ourselves bound

NEW Yes, in faith, you shall have it, you may
believe me,

I will be as good as my word, as shortly you shall
see

CUTHB Then, brother Pierce, we may think our-
selves happy,

¹ [The gallows]

That ever we were with him acquainted.

PIERCE. Even so we may of a certainty,
That such good luck unto us hath happened.
But, brother Cuthbert, is it not best
To go in for awhile, and distribute this booty?
Whereas we three will make some feast,
And quass together, and be merry.

CUTHB. What say you, Nichol?

NEW. I do agree.

Here entereth VIRTUOUS LIVING.

But, soft, awhile be ruled by me,
Look, yonder a little do you not see,
Who cometh yonder? awhile we will abide;
Let him say his pleasure, and we will stand aside.

V. L. O gracious God, how wonderful are thy
works,
How highly art thou of all men to be praised:
Of Christians, Saracens, Jews, and also Turks,
Thy glory ought to be erected and raised.
What joys hast thou prepared for the virtuous life,
And such as have thy name in love and in awe;
Thou hast promised salvation to man, child, and
wife,

That thy precepts observe, and keep well thy law.
And to the virtuous life what doth ensue?

Virtutis premium honor, Tully doth say;
Honour is thy guerdon for virtue due,
And eternal salvation at the latter day.
How clear in conscience is the virtuous life!
The vicious hath consciences so heavy as lead.
Their conscience and their doing is alway at strife;
And altogether they live yet to sin they are dead.

NEW. God give you good-morrow, sir, how do
you to-day?

V. L. God bless you also both now and alway.
I pray you, with me have you any acquaintance?

NEW Yea, marry, I am an old friend of yours,
perchance

V L If it be so, I marvel very much,
That the dulness of my wit should be such,
That you should be altogether out of my memory
Tell me your name, I pray you heartily

NEW By the faith of my body, you will appose
me by and by,
But, in faith, I was but little when I was first
born,

And my mother to tell me my name thought it
scorn

V L I will never acquaint me with such in any
place,
As are ashamed of their names, by God's grace

NEW I remember my name now, it is come to
my mind

I have mused much, before I could it find
Nichol Newfangle it is, I am your old friend

V L My friend? marry, I do thee defy,
And all such company I do deny
For thou art a companion for roisters and ruffians,
And not fit for any virtuous companions

NEW And, in faith, art thou at plain defiance?
Then I see I must go to mine old acquaintance
Well, Cuthbert Cutpurse and [Pierce] Pickpurse,
we must go together,

For, like will to like, quoth the Devil to the Collier

V L Indeed, thou say'st true, it must needs
be so,

For like will ever to his like go,
And my conditions and thine so far do disagree,
That no familiarity between us may be
For thou nourishest vice both day and night
My name is Virtuous Life, and in virtue is my
delight

So vice and virtue cannot together be united,

But the one the other hath always spited
For as the water quencheth fire, and the flame doth
suppress,

So virtue hateth vice, and seeketh a redress

PIERCE Tush, if he be so dangerous, let us not
him esteem,

And he is not for our company, I see very well,

For if he be so holy, as he doth seem,

We and he differ as much as heaven and hell

NEW You know, that like will to like alway,

And you see how holily he is now bent

To seek his company why do we assay?

PIERCE I promise you, do you what you will
I do not consent

For I pass not for him, be he better or be he worse

NEW Friend, if you be wise, beware your purse

For this fellow may do you good when all comes
to all,

If you chance to lose your purse in Outpurse Hall

But, in faith, fare ye well, sith of our company you
be weary

We will go to a place, where we will be merry

For I see your company and ours do far differ,

For like will to like, quoth the Devil to the Collier

CUTHB Well, let us be gone, and bid him adieu

For I see this proverb proveth very true

PIERCE Then let us go to Hob Filcher's house,

Where we will be merry, and quass carouse

And there shall we find Tom Tossopot, with other
mo,

Meet makes for us therefore let us go

Then, seeing we are all of one mind,

Let us three go, and leave a knave here behind

[*Exeunt* NEW, CUTHB, and PIERCE]

They sing this song¹ as they go out from the place
Good hostess, lay a crab in the pie, and broil a mess
of souse-a
That we may toss the bowl to and fro, and brinks
them all carouse-a
And I will pledge Tom Tossopot, till I be drunk as a
mouse-a
Whoso will drink to me all day, I will pledge them
all carouse-a
Then we will not spare for any cost, so long as we be
in house-a
Then, hostess, fill the pot again, for I pledge them
all carouse-a

[*When this is spoken, V LIVING must pause*
a while, and then say as followeth

O wicked unps, that have such delight,
 In evil conversation wicked and abhominable
 And from virtue's lore withdiaw yourselves quite,
 And lean to vice most vile and detestable
 How prone and ready we are vice to ensue?
 How deaf we be good counsel to hear?
 How strange we make it our hearts to renew?
 How little we have God's threats in fear?
 Saint Augustine say'th in his fifth book, *De*
Civitate Dei,
Conjunctæ sunt ædes Virtutis et Honoris, say'th he
 The houses of virtue and honour joined together be
 And so the way to honour's house is disposed,
 That through virtue's house he must needs pass

¹ [The song is divided between the three, each singing two lines, and the division is marked, but the name of the singer in each case is not given]

Or else from honour he shall soon be deposed,
And brought to that point, that he before was

But if through virtue honour be attained

The path to salvation may soon be gained
Some there be, that do fortune prefer,
Some esteem pleasure more than virtuous life
But in my opinion all such do err,
For virtue and fortune be not at strife

Where virtue is, fortune must needs grow

But fortune without virtue has soon the overthrow

Thrice happy are they, that do virtue embrace,
For a crown of glory shall be then reward
Satan at no time may him anything deface,
For God over him will have such regard,

That his foes he shall soon tread under foot,

And by God's permission pluck them up by the root

It booteth not vice against virtue to stir,
For why vice is feeble and of no force

But *virtus eterna praeclaraque habetur*

Wherefore I would all men would have remorse,
And eschew evil company vile and pernicious

Delight in virtuous men, and hate the vicious
And as the end of virtue is honour and felicity,
So mark well the end of wickedness and vice !

Shame in this world and pain eternally,

Wherefore you, that are here, learn to be wise,

And the end of the one with the other weigh,

By that time you have heard the end of this play

But why do I thus much say in the praise of
virtue,

Sith the thing praiseworthy needs no praise at all ?

It praiseth itself sufficiently, this is true,

Which chaseth away sin as bitter as gall ?

And where virtue is, it need not to be praised,

For the renown thereof shall soon be raised

Intiat GOOD FAME

G F O Virtuous Life, God rest you merry,
To you am I come for to attend

V L Good Fame, ye are welcome heartily
I pray you, who did you hither send?

G F Even God's Promise hath sent me unto
you,

Willing me from you not to depart
But always to give attendance due,
And in no wise from you to start
For God of his promise hath most liberally
Sent me Good Fame to you Virtuous Life,
Whereby it may be seen manifestly,
God's great zeal to virtue both in man and wife
For why they may be sure, that I, Good Fame,
From the virtuous life will never stray
Whereby honour and renown may grow to their
name,

And eternal salvation at the latter day.

V L God is gracious and full of great mercy
To such as in virtue set their whole delight
Pouring his benefits on them abundantly
O man, what, meanest thou with thy Saviour to fight?
Come unto him, for he is full of mercy,
The fountain of virtue and of godliness the spring
Come unto him and thou shall live everlastingly,
He doth not require thee any price to bring

Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati

Estis, et ego refocillabo vos

Come unto me, ye that travail (say'th he)
And such as with sin are heavily loden
And of me myself refreshed you shall be
Repent, repent, your sins shall be downtrodden—
Well, Good Fame, sith God of his goodness
Hath hither sent you on me to attend,
Let us give thank to him with humbleness,

And persuaue with all men then liues to amend
 G F Vntuous Life, I do thereto agree,
 For it becometh all men for to do so

Intrat GOD'S PROMISE, and HONOUR with him

But, behold, yonder cometh God's Promise, as
 seemeth me,

And Honour with him cometh also

V L Such godly company pleaseth me very well,
 For vicious men from our company we should expel
 G P God rest you meriy both, and God be
 your guide

HONOUR We are now come to the place where
 we must abide

For from you, Vntuous Life, I Honour may not slide

G P I am God's Promise, which is a thing eterne,
 And nothing more sure than his promise may be
 A sure foundation to such as will learn

God's precepts to observe then must they needs see
 Honour in this world, and at last a crown of glory,
 Ever in joy and mirth, and never to be sorry

Wherefore, O Vntuous Life, to you we do repaie,
 As messengers from God, his promise to fulfil,
 And therefore sit you down now in this chaire,
 For to endue you with honour is God's promise
 and will

[VIRTUOUS LIVING sitteth down in the chaire]

HONOUR Now take this sword in hand as a
 token of victory,

This crown from my head to you I shall give
 I crown you with it as one most worthy,
 And see that all vice ye do punish and grieve,
 For in this world I Honour with you shall remain,
 And Good Fame from you cannot refrain.
 And after this life a greater crown you shall attain

G F What heart can think, or what tongue can
 express

The great goodness of God, which is almighty ?
 Who seeth this, and seeks not vice to suppress,
 Honour, Good Fame, yea, and life everlastingly ?
 Thy name be praised, O Lord, therefore,
 And to thee only be glory and honour !
 Sith God's Promise hath brought honour into place,
 I will for a while leave you three alone
 For I must depart now for a little space,
 But I shall come to you again anon

[Exit GOOD FAME

V L God's Promise is infallible, his word is
 most true,
 And to ground thereon a man may be bold
 As Scripture doth testify and declare unto you,
 On which foundation your building you may behold
 For virtuous rulers the fruit of felicity do reap
 And reward of fame and honour to themselves
 they heap
 HONOUR Seeing we have now endued him with
 the crown and the sword,
 Which is due unto him by God's promise and
 word,
 Let us three sing unto God with one accord
 G P To sing praises unto God it liketh well me
 V L And I also with you do thereto agree
 A pleasant noise to God's ears it must needs bring,
 That God's Promise, Honour, and Virtuous Life
 do sing

They sing this Song following

Life is but short, hope not therein ;

Virtue immortal seek for to win

Whoso to virtue doth apply,

Good fame and honour must obtain

And also live eternally,

For virtuous life this is the gain.

Life is but, &c.

Hath brought a pack of wool to a fair pair of hosen
This is good thrift, says, learn it who shall,
And now a couple of fellows are come from Cut-
 purse Hall,
And there have they brought many a purse to wrack
Lo, here is gear that will make their necks for to
 crack
For I promised Tom Tossplot and Ralph Roister a
 piece of land
Lo, here it is ready in my right hand
A wallet and a bottle, but it is not to be sold
I told them before, that of Beggar's Manor it did
 hold,
And for Cuthbert Cutpurse and Pierce Pickpurse
 here is good fare
This is the land of the two-legged mare,
Which I to them promised, and [to] divide it with
 discretion
Shortly you shall see I will put them in possession
How like you this merchandise, my masters? Is it
 not trim?
A wallet, a bottle, a staff, and a string,
How say'st thou, Wat Waghalter? Is not this a
 trim thing?
In faith, Ralph Roister is in good case, as I suppose,
For he hath lost all that he hath, save his doublet
 and his hose,
And Tom Tossplot is even at that same point,
For he would lose a limb or jeopard a joint,
But, behold, yonder they come both, now all is
 gone and spent,
I know their errand, and what is their intent.

[*Here entereth in RALPH ROISTER and TOM TOSSPOT in their doublet and their hose, and no cap nor hat on their head, saving a nightcap, because the strings of the beards may not be seen, and RALPH ROISTER must curse and ban as he cometh in*¹]

RALPH Well, be as be may, is no hanning,
But I fear that, when that this gear shall come to
scanning,

The land to the which we did wholly trust
Shall be gone from us, and we cast in the dust

TOM Gog's blood, if Nichol Newfangle serve
us so,

We may say, that we have had a shrewd blow,
For all that I had is now lost at the dice,
My sword, my buckler, and all at sink and cise,²
My coat, my cloak, and my hat also,
And now in my doublet and my hose I am fain to go
Therefore, if Nichol Newfangle help not now at a
pinch

I am undone, for of land I have not an inch

RALPH By Gog's wounds, even so is it now with me,
I am in my doublet and my hosen, as you see
For all that I had doth lie at pledge for ale.
By the mass, I am as bare as my nail,
Not a cross of money to bless me have I,
But I trow we shall meet Nichol Newfangle by
and by

[NICHOL NEWFANGLE *comes forward*
NEW Turn hither, turn hither, I say, sir knave,
For I am even he, that you so fain would have

RALPH What, Master Nichol, are you here all
this while?

¹ [It appears from what is afterwards said in the piece, that they do not see Newfangle, who has probably retired to the back of the stage]

² [Five and Six, a game at cards or dice]

NEW I think I am here, or else I do thee beguile

TOM So God help me, I am glad that you be in sight

For in faith your presence hath made my heart light

NEW. I will make it lighter anon, I trow

My masters, I have a piece of land for you, do you know? [Aside]

RALPH Mary, that is the cause of our hither resort

For now we are void of all joy and comfort

TOM You see in what case we now stand in,
And you heard us also even now, I ween,
Wherefore, good Master Nichol, let us have this land now,

And we shall think ourselves much bound unto you

NEW You know, that I this land must divide,
Which I shall do, but a while abide
All thy goods for ale at pledge be *(to Tom)*,
And thou *(to Ralph)* say'st a pair of dice have made thee free¹

First, Ralph Roister, come thou unto me,
Because thou hast lost every whit at dice,

[He giveth the bag to R. ROISTER, and the bottle to TOM TOSSPOT.]

Take there this bag to carry bread and cheese,
And take thou this bottle, and mark what I shall say

If he chance to eat the bread and cheese by the way,
Do thou in this matter follow my counsel,
Drink up the drink, and knock him about the head
with the bottle,

And because that Ralph is the elder knave,

¹ [i.e., Destitute of money]

THIS staff also of me he shall have ¹

RALPH But where is the land, that to us you
promised ?

NEW In faith, good fellows, my promise is per-
formed

TOM By Gog's blood, I thought that it would be so

NEW This must you have, whe'r you will or no,
Or else fall to work with shovel and with spade,
For begging now must be your chiefest trade

RALPH Gog's heart, can I away² with this
life ?

To beg my bread from door to door ?

I will rather cut my throat with a knife,
Than I will live thus beggarly and poor
By Gog's blood, rather than I will it assay,
I will rob and steal, and keep the highway

TOM Well, Ralph Roister, seeing we be in this
misery,

And labour we cannot, and to beg it is a shame,
Yet better it is to beg most shamefully,
Than to be hanged, and to thievery³ ourselves frame

NEW Now, my masters, learn to beware,
But like will to like, quoth the Devil to the Collier

RALPH O Lord, why did not I consider before,
What should of roisting be the final end
Now the horse is stolen, I shut the stable-door
Alas, that I had time my life to amend ¹

Time I have, I must needs confess,
But yet in misery that time must be spent
Seeing that my life I would not redress,
But wholly in riot I have it all spent

Wherefore I am now brought to this exigent
But the time pass'd cannot be called, this is no nay

¹ [The 4to of 1587 reads, *thou shalt have*]

[The 4to of 1568 has *way*]

³ [The 4to of 1568 has *the every*]

Wherefore all here take example by me
 Time tanneth no man, but passeth still away,
 Take time, while time is, for time doth flee,
 Use well your youthly years, and to virtuous lore
 agree

For if I to virtue had any respect,
 This misfortune to me could not have chanced,
 But because unto vice I was a subject,
 To no good fame may I be now advanced.
 My credit also is now quite stanch'd
 Wherefore I would all men my woful case might see,
 That I to them a mirror might be

TOM O all ye parents, to you I do say
 Have respect to your children and for their educa-
 tion,

Lest you answer therefore at the latter day,
 And your meed shall be eternal damnation
 If my parents had brought me up in virtue and
 learning,

I should not have had this shameful end,
 But all licentious was my up-bringing,
 Wherefore learn by me your faults to amend
 But neither in virtue, learning, or yet honest trade,
 Was I bred up my living for to get
 Therefore in misery my time away must vade,
 For vicious persons behold now the net
 I am in the snare, I am caught with the gin,
 And now it is too late, I cannot again begin

NEW This gear would have been seen to before,
 But now, my masters, you are on the score
 Be packing, I say, and get you hence,
 Learn to say I pray, good master, give me nine-
 pence

RALPH. Thou, villain, art only the causer of this
 woe,
 Therefore thou shalt have somewhat of me, or ere
 I go

TOM Thou hast given me a bottle here ,
But thou shalt drink first of it, be it ale or
beer

[RALPH ROISTER *beateth him with his staff,*
and TOM TOSSPOT *with his bottle*

RALPH Take this of me, before I go hence

TOM Take that of me in part of recompense

NEW Now am I driven to play the master of
fence

Come no near¹ me, you knaves, for your life,

[*They have him down, and beat him, and he
crieth for help*

Lest I stick you both with this woodknife

Back, I say ! back, thou sturdy beggar !

Body of me, they have ta'en away my dagger

RALPH Now, in faith, you whoreson, take heed,
I you advise,

How you do any more young men entice

TOM Now, farewell, thou hast thy just meed

RALPH Now we go abegging, God send us good
speed !

[RALPH ROISTER and TOM TOSSPOT *go out*
and SEVERITY, *the judge, entereth, and*
NICHOL NEWFANGLE *lieth on the ground*
groaning

SEV That upright judgment without partiality
Be minist'rd duly to ill-doers and offenders !

I am one, whose name is Severity,

Appointed a judge to suppress evil-doers,

Not for hatred nor yet for malice

But to advance virtue and suppress vice

Wherefore Isidorus these words doth say

Non est Judex, si in eo non est Justitia !

He is not a judge that Justice doth want,

But he that truth and equity doth plant

¹ [Nearer]

Fully also these words doth express,
Which words are very true doubtless
Semper iniquus est iudex, qui aut invidet aut favet
They are unrightful judges all,
That are either envious or else partial

NEW Help me up, good sir, for I have got a fall

SEV What cause have you, my friend, thus
heavily to groan ?

NEW O sir, I have good cause to make great
moan ,

Here were two fellows but right now,
That (I think) have killed me, I make God a
vow

I pray you, tell me, am I alive or am I dead ?

SEV Fellow, it is more meet for thee to be in
thy bed,

Than to lie here in such sort as thou dost

NEW. In faith, I should have laid some of the
knaves in the dust,

If I had had your sword right now in presence ,
I would have had a leg or an arm, ere they had gone
hence

SEV Who is it that hath done thee this injury ?

NEW A couple of beggars have done me this
villany

SEV I see, if severity should not be executed,
One man should not live by another
If such injuries should not be confuted,
The child would regard neither father nor mother
Give me thy hand, and I shall help thee

NEW Hold fast your sword then, I pray you
heartily [He riseth

SEV Now, friend, it appeareth unto me,
That you have been a traveller of the country
And such as travel do hear of things done,
As well in the country, as the city of London
How say you, my friend, can you tell any news

NEW That can I, for I came lately from the
 stews
 There are knaves abroad, you may believe me,
 As in this place shortly you shall see
 No more words, but mum, and stand awhile aside
 Yonder cometh two knaves, therefore abide

Intrat C CUTPURSE and PIERCE PICKPURSE

CUTHB By Gog's wounds, if he help not now,
 we are undone
 By the mass, for my part, I wot not whither to run
 PIERCE We be so pursu'd on every side
 That, by Gog's heart, I wot not where to abide
 CUTHB Every constable is charged to make
 privy search,
 So that, if we may be got, we shall be thrown over
 the perch

PIERCE If Nichol Newfangle help us not now
 in our need,
 We are like in our business full evil to speed
 Therefore let us make no delay,
 But seek him out of hand, and be gone away

SEVERITY and N NEWFANGLE come forward

NEW Soft, my masters, awhile I you pray,
 For I am here, for whom you do seek,
 For you know that like will never from like
 I promised you of late a piece of land,
 Which by and by shall fall into your hand
 CUTHB What, Master Nichol! how do you to-day?
 PIERCE For the passion of God, Master Nichol,
 help to rid us away,
 And help us to the land, whereof you did say,
 That we might make money of it by and by,
 For out of the realm we purpose to fly
 NEW Marry, I will help you, I swear by All
 Hallows

And will not part from you, till you come to the
gallows

Lo, noble Severity, these be they without doubt
On whom this rumour of thievery¹ is gone about,
Therefore, my masters, here is the snare,
That shall lead you to the land, called the two-
legged mare

[*He putteth about each of their necks a halter*

SEV My friend, hold them fast even in that
plight

NEW Then come, and help me with your sword ;
for I fear they will fight.

SEV Strive not, my masters , for it shall not
avail ,

But awhile give ear unto my counsel
Your own words hath condemned you for to die ,
Therefore to God make yourselves ready
And by and by I will send one, which for your
abuson,

Shall lead you to the place of execution

NEW. Help to tie their hands, before ye be gone.

[*SEV. helpeth to tie them.*

SEV Now they are bound, I will send one to you
anon

[*Exit.*

NEW Ah, my masters, how like you this play?
You shall take possession of your land to-day !
I will help to bridle the two-legged mare,
And both you for to ride need not to spare.
Now, so God help me, I swear by this bread,
I marvel who shall play the knave, when you
twain be dead

CUTHB O cursed cartiff, born in an evil hour,
Woe unto me, that ever I did thee know.
For of all iniquity thou art the bow'r,
The seed of Satan thou dost always sow

[¹ The 4to of 1568 has, as before, *the entry*]

Thou only hast given me the overthiow
 Woe worth the hour, wherein I was born !
 Woe worth the time that ever I knew thee !
 For now in misery I am forlorn ,
 O, all youth take example by me
 Flee from evil company, as from a serpent you
 would flee ,
 For I to you all a mirror may be
 I have been daintily and delicately bred,
 But nothing at all in virtuous lore
 And now I am but a man dead,
 Hanged I must be, which grieveth me full sore
 Note well the end of me therefore ,
 And you that fathers and mothers be,
 Bring not up your children in too much liberty
 PIERCE Sith that by the law we are now
 condemned,
 Let us call to God for his mercy and his grace ,
 And exhort that all vice may be amended,
 While we in this world have time and space
 And though our lives have licentiously been spent,
 Yet at the last to God let us call ,
 For he heareth such as are ready to repent,
 And desireth not that sinners should fall
 Now are we ready to suffer, come when it shall

Here entereth in HANKIN HANGMAN

NEW. Come, Hankin Hangman, let us two cast
 lots,
 And between us divide a couple of coats
 Take thou the one, and the other shall be mine
 Come, Hankin Hangman, thou cam'st in good
 time [*They take off the coats, and divide them*
 HANKIN Thou should'st have one, Nichol, I
 swear by the mass,
 For thou bringest work for me daily to pass ,

And through thy means I get more coats in one
year,

Than all my living is worth beside, I swear.

Therefore, Nichol Newfangle, we will depart never
For like will to like, quoth the Devil to the Collier

NEW Now, farewell, Hankin Hangman, farewell
to thee.

HANKIN Farewell, Nichol Newfangle. come
you two with me.

[HANKIN goeth out, and leadeth the one in his
right hand, and the other in his left,
having halters about their necks

NEW Ha, ha, ha! there is a brace of hounds,
well worth a dozen crowns,

Behold the huntsman leadeth away!

I think in twenty towns, on hills, and eke on downs

They taken have their prey

So well liked was their hunting on hill and eke on
mountain,

That now they be up in a lease ¹

To keep within a string, is it not a gay thing?

Do all of you hold your peace?

Why then, good gentle boy, how likest thou this
play?

No more, but say thy mind

I swear by this day, if thou wilt this assay,

I will to thee be kind

This is well brought to pass of me, I swear by the
mass

Some to hang, and other some to beg

I would I had Balaam's ass to carry me, where I
was,

How say you, little Meg?

Ralph Roister and Tom Tossplot, are now not
worth a groat,

¹ [Leash]

So well with them it is
 I would I had a pot, for now I am so hot ,
 By the mass, I must go piss
 Philip Fleming and Hance have danc'd a pretty
 dance,
 That all is now spent out
 And now a great mischance came on while they
 did prance
 They lie sick of the gout
 And in a 'spital-house, with little Laurence louse,
 They be fain for to dwell
 If they eat a moisel of souse, or else a roasted
 mouse,
 They think they do faie well
 But as for Peter Pickpurse, and also Cuthbert
 Cutpurse,
 You saw them both right now
 With them it is much worse, for they do ban and
 curse ,
 For the halter shall them bow
 Now if I had my nag, to see the world wag,
 I would straight ride about
 Ginks, do fill the bag I would not pass a rag
 To hit you on the snout

The DEVIL entereth.

LU Ho, ho, ho ' mine own boy, make no more
 delay,
 But leap up on my back straightway
 NEW Then who shall hold my stirrup, while I
 go to horse ?
 LU Tush, for that do thou not force !
 Leap up, I say, leap up quickly
 NEW Woh, Ball, woh ! and I will come by and by
 Now for a pair of spurs I would give a good groat !
 To try whether this jade do amble or trot

Farewell, my masters, till I come again,
For now I must make a journey into Spain

*[He rideth away on the DEVIL'S back Here
entereth VIRTUOUS LIFE and HONOUR*

V. L. O worthy diadem, O jewel most precious,
O virtue, which dost all worldly things excel
How worthy a treasure thou art to the virtuous?
Thy praise no pen may write, nor no tongue tell
For I, who am called Virtuous Life,
Have in this world both honour and dignity
Immortal fame of man, child and wife,
Daily waiteth and attendeth on me
The commodity of virtue in me you may behold,
The enormity of vice you have also seen
Therefore now to make an end we may be bold,
And pray for our noble and gracious Queen

HONOUR To do so, Virtuous Life, it is our
bounden duty,
And because we must do so, before we do end,
To aid us therein, Good Fame cometh verily,
Which daily and hourly on you doth attend

Here entereth GOOD FAME

G F Virtuous Life, do what you list
To pray or to sing I will you assist
V L O Lord of hosts, O King Almighty,
Pour down thy grace upon our noble Queen
Vanquish her foes (Lord), that daily and nightly
Though her thy laws may be sincerely seen

HONOUR The honourable council also (O Lord
preserve,
The lords both of the clergy and of the temporality
Grant that with meekness they may thee serve,
Submitting to thee with all humility

G F. O Lord, preserve the Commons of this
realm also,

Pour upon them thy heavenly grace ,
To advance virtue and vice to overthrow,
That at last in heaven with thee they may have
place.

AMEN

*A Song.*¹

*Where like to like is a-matched so,
That virtue must of force decay
There God with vengeance, plagues and woe,
By judgment just must needs repay
For, like to like, the worldings cry
Although both likes do grace defy
And where as Satan planted hath
In vicious minds a sinful trade
There like to like do walk his path,
By which to him like they are made
So like with like reward obtain,
To have their meed in endless pain
Likewise in faith, where matches be,
And where as God hath planted grace
There do his children still agree,
And like to like do run their race
Like Christ, like hearts of Christian men
As like to like well-coupled then
Therefore like grace, like faith and love,
Like virtue, springs in each degree
Where like assistance from above
Doth make them like so right to be
A holy God, a Christ most just
And so like souls in him to trust*

¹ [This song is divided by a paragraph-mark between Virtuous Life and the other speakers, but the names are not given, and the mode of distribution is consequently uncertain.]

*Then like as Christ above doth reign,
In heaven high our Saviour best
So like with him shall be our gain,
In peace and joy, and endless rest
If we ourselves like him do frame,
In fear of his most holy name
To him be praise, that grace doth give,
Whereby he fashioneth us anew
And make[s] us holily to live,
Like to himself in faith most true
Which our redemption sure hath wrought
Like him to be most dearly bought*

FINIS

END OF VOL III